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THE NEW REPUBLIC

+ *Andrew Sullivan Parses FoleyGate*

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WHICH McCAIN?

The Senator's Hawkish Present Belies a More Dovish Past

By JOHN B. JUDIS

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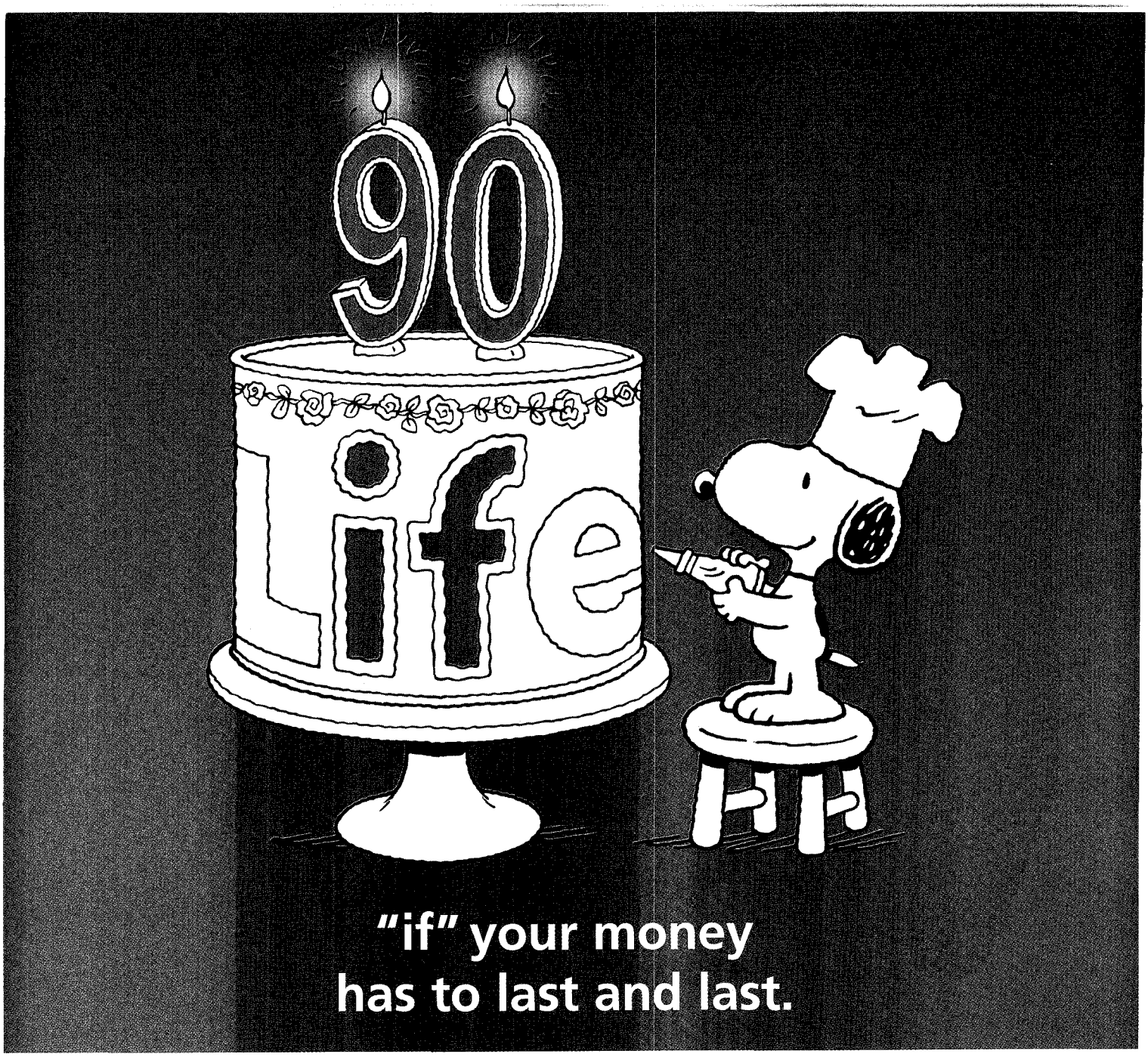

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CORRESPONDENCE

PREACHING TO THE CHOIR

EDWARD O. WILSON DEVOTES MUCH of his open letter to repeated assertions of scientific fact trumping religious belief ("Apocalypse Now," September 4). A religious man of science will already be aware of these conflicts; a religious fundamentalist will not admit them. So I cannot fathom to what end Wilson lists them, other than to take an opportunity to make digs at poor fools still clinging to the outdated beliefs he has foresworn. Most major religions are increasingly warming to the idea of global stewardship as a religious duty, so there is plenty of room for détente between religious and secular environmentalists.

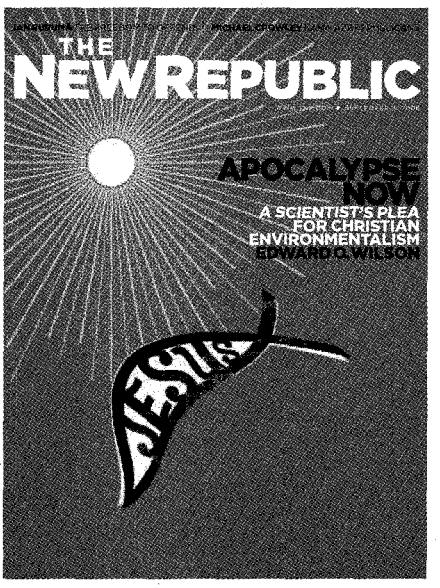
DOUGLAS HAUCK
Berea, Ohio

VARIATIONS ON A GENE

OREN HARMAN OFFERS AN INsightful commentary on the stimulating book by Eva Jablonka and Marion J. Lamb ("The Evolution of Evolution," September 4). I noted only one imperfection detracting from the review: the dubious references to biological perfection. The notion of a globally ideal phenotype does not fit comfortably into either a neo-Darwinian or post-neo-Darwinian (à la Jablonka and Lamb) framework. Genetic variability and the compromises necessitated by multiple—and often conflicting—selective forces virtually guarantee that any phenotype will be less than ideal in some potentially accessible environment.

NEIL GREENSPAN
Professor of Pathology
Case Western Reserve University
Cleveland, Ohio

HARMAN DESCRIBES TWO WAYS IN which current evolutionary theory diverges from the neo-Darwinian model of random variation and natural selection. But the examples both seem to fit the variation/selection model. The shortage of the amino acid in the bacteria's environment and the introduction of aquatic activities in the monkey's environment both seem to be analogous to longer winters, which select white bears over brown ones. Therefore, it isn't clear that the new conditions add new variations, rather than simply select from existing ones.



PHIL SHAW
Las Vegas, Nevada

OREN HARMAN RESPONDS:
Yes, as Neil Greenspan says, the belief in perfection has historically hindered our understanding in biology, since perfection has almost always entailed a belief in a final cause, or *telos*, in evolution—a quantity that cannot be studied scientifically. Understanding that the study of biological systems must be purged of teleological thinking was Darwin's initial great achievement, even before he offered a naturalistic mechanism to explain the diversity of life on earth. Ironically, as I write in my review, nature's *imperfections* served as valuable clues in working out such a mechanism. One of the achievements of modern biology is to understand that there is no such thing as a "globally ideal phenotype"—there are only genotypes and their resulting phenotypes, selected to fit their local environments as optimally as possible under all the constraints acting on organisms at the genetic, physiological, anatomical, and environmental levels. On this issue, at least, both neo-Darwinians and "post-neo-Darwinians" agree. Nothing in nature is truly perfect, since perfection is a human designation, and nature isn't in the business of giving itself grades.

Also, as Phil Shaw notes, the Darwinian variation/selection model still holds. What is now argued over is the extent to which all variation is random and the extent to which all heritable variation is genetic. The examples provided show both that variation can often be facilitated or instructed and that it need not always be genetic to be heritable. These are two important points that were dismissed by the neo-Darwinists for much of the twentieth century but that are, thankfully, gaining more attention today.

DEPARTMENT OF CLARIFICATIONS

Due to an editorial error, last week's cover story by Thomas Frank lacked an author identification. It should have noted, "Thomas Frank is the author of *What's the Matter With Kansas?*. He is currently working on a book about conservative governance."

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

Our article on the family of Hurricane Katrina evacuees who moved to Kalamazoo, Michigan ("The Golden Ticket," August 14), stated that a large-screen television in the family's home had been donated by a chef at the local Radisson Hotel. Actually, the chef only delivered the television. It was donated by the Radisson itself, in response to a fund-raising drive conducted by Lynn McLeod and the volunteers from Kalamazoo who organized the family's resettlement.

In "Double Enmity" (September 26), a quote attributed to Dan Gerstein—"Joe Lieberman does NOT beat his wife"—was not written by Gerstein. Rather, it was written by an unknown person posting under the name "Dan Gerstein" in the Lieberman campaign blog's comments section. We regret the errors. ■

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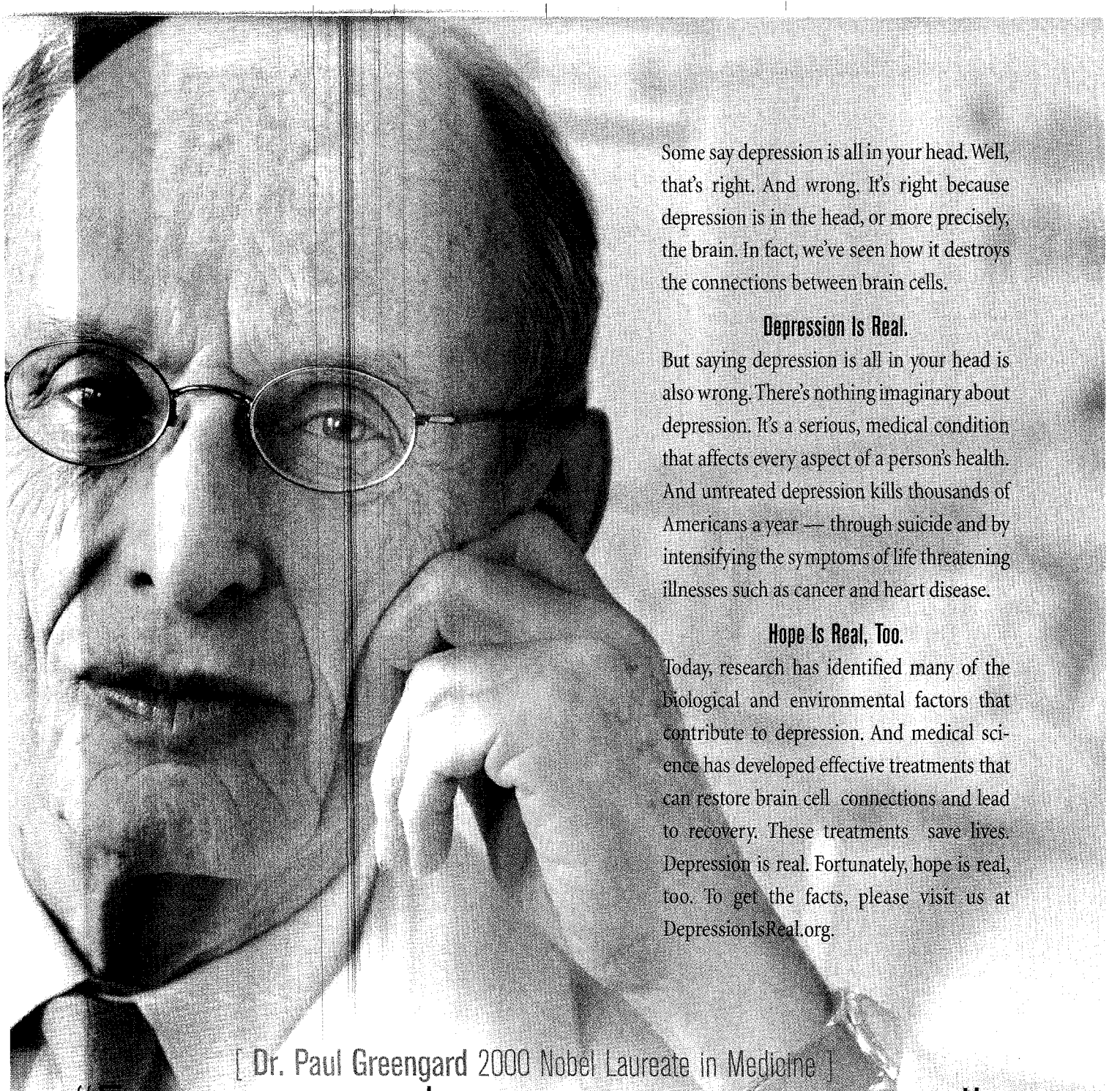

Some say depression is all in your head. Well, that's right. And wrong. It's right because depression is in the head, or more precisely, the brain. In fact, we've seen how it destroys the connections between brain cells.

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[Dr. Paul Greengard 2000 Nobel Laureate in Medicine]

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Heads Up

TRB FROM WASHINGTON

LAST WEEK, I WENT SEARCHing the liberal Web for discussions of *Idomeneo*. The Deutsche Oper, a Berlin opera house, had recently canceled the Mozart classic because it feared Muslims would react violently to a scene featuring Mohammed's severed head. Germans declared that free speech was under siege. *The New York Times* covered every wrinkle. Right-wing websites buzzed. And, on the big liberal blogs, virtual silence.

If pressed, most liberal bloggers would probably have condemned the opera house's decision. But they didn't feel pressed. Blogging thrives on outrage (see, for instance, my colleague Martin Peretz's outraged blogging on the affair at tnr.com/blog/spine), and the *Idomeneo* closure just didn't get liberal blood flowing. And why is that? Perhaps because it didn't have anything to do with George W. Bush.

Consider the liberal blogosphere's reaction to Joseph Ratzinger's (a.k.a. Pope Benedict XVI's) September 12 speech, in which he quoted a Byzantine emperor calling Islam "evil and inhuman"—prompting Muslim zealots to kill a nun in Somalia and two Iraqi Christians. Some liberals did unequivocally condemn the violence. The *Washington Monthly*'s Kevin Drum, for instance, noted that "Benedict's remarks may have been needlessly insulting, but the vicious and theatrical displays of violence from all over the Muslim world have nonetheless been completely disgraceful." But Drum was not exactly typical. Look at the reaction on the über-blog *Daily Kos*. Markos Moulitsas himself didn't mention the controversy, but I found six "diaries" on the subject, written by contributors to his site, which garnered a sizeable response. One blamed the pope, one blamed the Muslim response, and one blamed both Islam and Christianity for being expansionist and violent. And the other three? They all blamed Bush. "Just in time for this year's elections," noted one writer. "Republicans need the Catholic vote, and, thus, we see [the pope's statement]." Another Kossack called Ratzinger's statement "a calculated, intentional strategy designed to help George Bush and the Republicans in the 2006 elections." A third writer criticized Ratzinger for apologizing, because "[t]he Pope's apology played into the Bush culture of fear."

I know, I know. Bush is a horrendous president. The United States is on the verge of a midterm election that could strip him of much of his power. And liberal blogs are focused on trying to make sure that happens. That's all well and good.

But it's not enough. There are liberal causes that have nothing to do with opposing Bush and his Republican henchmen. In fact, some of those causes might even place liberals and Republican henchmen on the same side. And liberals must be passionate about them nonetheless. Partisan militancy may be necessary to combat Republican power. But it cannot define what it means to be a liberal in the United States today.

The *Idomeneo* controversy helps explain why. In much of Europe, Muslim violence has become a serious threat to free speech. In publishing its cartoons of Mohammed last fall, the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* performed a test: Is it possible to safely caricature the Prophet? The answer—received loud and clear by the Deutsche Oper—was no. Lower profile incidents confirm the point. Within days of the opera's cancellation, a French philosophy teacher was placed under police protection for writing an article critical of Islam.

To their credit, conservatives are upset about this. But many conservatives have trouble distinguishing between opposing censorship and just plain opposing Islam. Ratzinger, for instance, has attacked Turkey's bid for membership in the European Union, because, as a Muslim country, it stands "in permanent contrast to Europe." In the United States, *The Weekly Standard*'s Fred Barnes responded to the Danish cartoon controversy by declaring that "Muslims all over the world are certainly enemies of Western civilization." An article in *National Review* suggested that the cartoon riots proved that the "cartoons depicting Muhammed as a dangerous man of arms ... had a good point."

No defense of free speech will prove effective if it strikes Muslims as simply a defense of Christian privilege. Art must be free to offend all religions. Yet, when it comes to their own, many conservatives grow hyper-sensitive. Right-wing pundits, from Mary Matalin to Joe Scarborough to Michelle Malkin, have claimed—absurdly—that the United States is rife with anti-Christian persecution. Imagine if the National Endowment for the Arts were subsidizing an opera that featured a defamation of Jesus Christ—conservatives would be howling for it to be shut down.

Liberals are less prone to a "clash of civilizations" mentality that undermines the very notion of free speech as a universal value. And that is why they must make the cause of European free speech their own. The best analogy is the "political correctness" fights that roiled college campuses in the late '80s and early '90s. When professors and students were punished for statements that violated racial and gender orthodoxy, it was conservatives like Dinesh D'Souza who most aggressively came to their defense. But many conservatives were tainted by their defense of the McCarthyite assault on campus free speech in the 1950s. In 1991, THE NEW REPUBLIC published a review of D'Souza's book by the renowned Southern historian Eugene Genovese. "As one who saw his professors fired during the McCarthy era, and who had to fight, as a pro-Communist Marxist, for his own right to teach," wrote Genovese, "I fear that our conservative colleagues are today facing a new McCarthyism." Yet the conservatives, he argued, couldn't defeat it alone. The cause of free speech "will go down, unless it is supported by a substantial portion of the left and center. ... It is time to close ranks."

We have reached that point again. During the PC wars, many liberals were genuinely conflicted about whether free speech outweighed racial and gender sensitivity on campus. Today, some liberals still excuse censorship in sensitivity's name. The bigger danger, however, is not sensitivity; it is indifference. Having adapted themselves so fully to a hyper-partisan environment, many liberals seem unable to conceive of a struggle in which the Republican right is not an enemy but an ally. But there are such struggles, and, without today's activist liberals, they will be harder to win. Free speech is under threat, and *Idomeneo* should be the last straw. It is time, once again, to close ranks.

PETER BEINART

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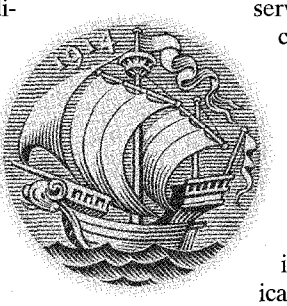
By the Horns

THIS TIME, THE Anti-Defamation League (ADL) has gone too far. It was bad enough when the organization that describes itself as being "devoted to fighting anti-Semitism, bigotry, and extremism" denounced the artist and humanitarian Mel Gibson for his unassailable observation that "the Jews are responsible for all the wars in the world." But, now, the ADL has revealed its utter lack of decency by attacking the Kazakh television newsman Borat Sagdiyev.

After all, is there anyone who can reasonably blame Borat for saying that, when in the United States, he prefers to travel by car rather than airplane "in case the Jews repeat their attack of 9/11"? And is it anything other than harmless fun when Borat engages in one of his favorite pastimes—an annual Kazakh ritual called "The Running of the Jew"? And is there any denying the heart-felt sentiments—not to mention age-old wisdom—contained in Borat's song "In My Country There Is Problem," whose chorus goes: "Throw the Jew down the well / So my country can be free / You must grab him by his horns / Then we have a big party"?

Before Abe Foxman has an aneurysm, let us note that the above is intended as satire. And so, of course, is Borat—a fictional character created and played by the brilliant British comedian Sacha Baron Cohen, himself an observant Jew. The ADL knows both of these facts—indeed, the organization has praised Cohen for being "proudly Jewish" and for trying "to use humor to unmask the absurd and irrational side of anti-Semitism"—and yet it is still fretting about Cohen's forthcoming film, *Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan*. The reason? The ADL, according to a statement it released last week, is "concerned . . . that the audience may not always be sophisticated enough to get the joke."

This particular concern—in which the merits, not to mention the intentions, of a work of art take a backseat to the issue of how some audiences might respond to it—has become commonplace. And, to a certain extent, that is understandable. After the 2004 murder of Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh by a Muslim extremist angered by van Gogh's criticism of Islam, and after the widespread Muslim riots over a Dutch newspaper's publication of editorial cartoons depicting the Islamic Prophet Mohammed, making art that may offend certain audiences is an undeniably risky business. Indeed, just last week, Berlin's Deutsche Oper canceled its production of Mozart's *Idomeneo* for fear that Muslims would violently protest a scene featuring the severed head of Mohammed.



But, while the Deutsche Oper episode and other less-publicized acts of artistic self-censorship may be understandable, that doesn't mean that they are any less regrettable. Because among the many freedoms upon which the making of good art depends is what Ian Buruma has called, in these pages, "the freedom to offend." The freedom to offend, of course, is an artistic freedom that can be abused. But it can also serve to clarify and reveal things about those it offends.

Just consider the case of Borat. While the ADL may kvetch, there is no greater critic of Borat than Kazakhstan's president Nursultan A. Nazarbayev, who evidently finds nothing funny about Borat's portrayal of his country—and, by extension, his regime—as benighted and backward. Last year, a Kazakh foreign ministry spokesman issued a public denunciation of Cohen's Borat performance and threatened to take legal action against the comic; around the same time, Nazarbayev's government also stripped Cohen's Borat website of its original domain name, .kz. The Kazakh Embassy in Washington has already denounced the forthcoming Borat film, and a foreign ministry spokesman has said that Nazarbayev's government will do everything in its considerable power to stop it from playing in Kazakhstan. Indeed, there were even reports—later denied—that Nazarbayev planned to ask President Bush to do something about Borat during their meeting at the White House last week.

All of which has only served to illustrate the true character of Nazarbayev. Long accustomed to ruling his country with relative impunity—earlier this year, the State Department rated his government's human rights record as "poor," citing its encroachments on political rights, freedom of the press, and freedom of religion—Nazarbayev refuses to tolerate even a fictional character like Borat. And, in that refusal, Cohen has revealed Nazarbayev's intolerance in a way that no State Department report ever will. Here's hoping the ADL's plea to keep audiences away from Borat's film works as well as it did for *The Passion of the Christ*. ■

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Mark Foley and the GOP.

Closet Cases

BY ANDREW SULLIVAN

THE MOST INFURIATING aspect of the Mark Foley fiasco is that we're still unclear on what exactly it is we're infuriated about. This was not pedophilia: The pages involved were all above the legal age of consent in Washington, D.C. It wasn't exactly pederasty either, given that we have no evidence (at least not yet) of any actual sexual contact between two live human beings. Sexual harassment? It doesn't appear that, at the time of the now-infamous instant messages, the pages were in Foley's employ. The best phrase I have been able to come up with for Foley's transgression is "virtual pederasty," with a large dose of extremely creepy and abusive behavior toward younger, vulnerable people whose trust he clearly betrayed.

Gay men, of course, went into a defensive crouch. Like Jews watching the Abramoff scandal, we winced at what we knew would be a collective blame-game. It always happens. There is no connection between homosexuality and an attraction to teenage boys—or at least, no more than there is between male heterosexuality and an attraction to teenage girls. But we know that, whenever a gay man is discovered in any relationship with a much younger man, the old pedophile smear will emerge, as, of course, it did in this case. This was not, in other words, "good for the gays."

Some comforted themselves with the thought that it wasn't good for the Republicans either. And there *is* some comfort there—purely on the hypocrisy front. The fact that, at the moment, it appears that the only law Foley may have broken was one he himself had helped pass is especially poignant. (The pages involved were of legal age according to the District of Columbia, but minors by the standard of an online predation law Foley championed.) There was even a video clip of Foley grandstanding with "America's Most Wanted." "If I were one of these sickos," he told the world, "I'd be nervous." Clearly not nervous enough.

Is it possible to feel sympathy for him? I guess I felt a twinge of it, as I feel when any gay man is subjected to public scorn and anger. And I do not want to doubt that he may have been molested himself as a teen; or that he might have an addiction problem; or that he has a psyche damaged by decades of internalized homophobia. What is the closet, after all, if it isn't the steadily crumbling facade of internal psychic damage?

But, in the end, none of this matters. Foley is entitled to his weaknesses and his pathologies. He is not entitled to drag young people in his care into them. If you read the extended instant-message trails—and I don't recommend it—you see that some of the teenagers he corresponded with also appear confused about their sexual orientation. Some continued the online chats past the gross-out moment and past obvious red flags. We should not condescend to male teenagers with roaring hormones. They know what they're doing, and yet, they don't know what they're doing. Some may even have been gay themselves, and curious about the world of online sex.

But that is not a mitigating factor. The role of older gay men toward teenage gay men should be to protect them, not to prey on them. Late adolescence and early adulthood are often difficult times for homosexuals, as they have to adopt a public and adult persona they may have a hard time coming to terms with in private or alone. The worst thing one can do to them at such an impressionable age, I think, is to initiate them into the cycle of shame and denial that comes with the closet. And that is what Foley did. He entangled the next generation in the pathology of his own.

He may, paradoxically, even have been generous and

DAVID COWLES

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kind to the pages in other contexts. Several accounts actually speak well of his interaction with the post-pubescent serfs who work on the Hill. He didn't treat them with contempt or condescension, as others did. He took an interest in them, befriended them, and helped them in their careers. And we need not ascribe all of this to murky motives. Like other gay men existing in deeply homophobic institutions (Catholic priests, for example), Foley may have compartmentalized his life in ways that made him a good person in one box and an abuser in another. This is not an excuse for his behavior. But it does help explain the genuinely good feelings Foley seems to have inspired in many of his peers; the loyalty some of his protégés felt; and the stark discrepancy between that and his predatory behavior toward youngsters in his care. This, at least, strikes me as just as plausible an explanation for the contrast as too much scotch.

And it points to the obvious conclusion to this tawdry, depressing spectacle. There is something deeply sick about a Republican elite that is comfortable around gay people, dependent on gay people, staffed by gay people—and yet also rests on brutal exploitation of homophobia to win elections at the base. These public homophobes, just like the ones in the Vatican, may even tolerate gay misbehavior more readily than adjusted gay people do. If you treat gay sex in any form as a shameful secret to keep concealed, the line between adult, consensual contact and the sexual exploitation of the young may not seem so stark. That's how someone like Speaker Dennis Hastert could have chosen not to know: He was already choosing not to know Foley was gay. In this way, Hastert is a milquetoast, secular version of Cardinal Bernard Law.

Many in the GOP have overcome this shame. The Log Cabin Republicans, for example, have shown how gay people can operate in conservative politics without having to be embarrassed, screwed up, or pathological. Some Republican senators—John McCain, Gordon Smith, Arlen Specter—seem able to deal with gay people and gay issues forthrightly, even if they do not support full gay equality.

But such honesty is scarce in this White House and this Congress. The miserable example of Mary Cheney, Stepford daughter, shows the full force of this syndrome. It isn't pretty. It depends upon knowing when to be silent, tip-toeing around bigotry, and shilling for people who may be personally accepting but publicly so in debt to the religious right that they cannot even formally speak the word "gay" in public.

It is this deeper, more nuanced hypocrisy that this episode exposes. The closet tolerants—and they include both the president and vice president—exist in a party that has built its electoral machine on systematic intolerance and the fueling of populist fear of homosexuals. This edifice cannot stand indefinitely, and the sudden collapse of Mark Foley's career may be a portent of what is to come. The old manners of GOP Washington are being buffeted by the countervailing currents of gay mainstreaming and political opportunism. At some point, Republicans are going to have to choose between the two. ■

Allen and the N-word.
White Lie

BY RANDALL KENNEDY

THIS PAST SUMMER, I was asked to testify as an expert witness in the case of Nicholas Minucci, who was charged with having committed a hate crime. In Bensonhurst, New York—which is notorious for its anti-black sentiments—Minucci, who is white, had beaten a black man with an aluminum baseball bat. When Minucci initially approached this man (whom he suspected of being a car thief), he reportedly said "Whattup, nigga." Prosecutors portrayed that language as evidence of a racial motivation for the ensuing violence. The defense asked me to testify, because they felt my book, *Nigger: The Strange Career of a Troublesome Word*, would support their argument that "nigga"—or its older variant "nigger"—can have a wide variety of meanings. They argued that, in hip-hop speak, "nigger" can be part of a neutral or even friendly salutation and that Minucci had adopted the argot and gestures of hip hop through close interactions with black youngsters in high school.

I initially resisted the defense attorney's request. I was busy at the time and also knew that, especially as a black man, I would receive sharp attacks from those who would wrongly perceive me as actually siding with the defendant (as opposed to merely offering expert testimony regarding an abstract proposition). But I finally decided to say on the witness stand what I had already put into print—that the N-word and its usage are more complex than is sometimes initially appreciated. Although "nigger"—derived from "niger," the Latin word for black—has been understood as an intensely derogatory insult since at least the early nineteenth century, more recent usages, particularly those created by the black community, have expanded its meaning.

But, if the N-word is so complex, how do we evaluate the case of Senator George Allen, the most recent high-profile N-word offender? He has been accused of repeatedly referring to blacks as "niggers" during his college years in the 1970s. Given my interest in the history of "nigger," I was, of course, captivated by this recent illustration of that term's troubling presence in American culture. Allen does not deny that referring to blacks derogatorily as "niggers" would have been terribly wrong. He swears, though, that he did not and does not use such language. *The Washington Post* quotes Allen as saying, "That word was not a part of my vocabulary. ... It is not who I was, and it is not who I am. It is contrary to every fiber of my being."

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I don't believe Allen's denial. His accusers, including Professor Larry Sabato of the University of Virginia, are credible. Moreover, his conduct fits all too well into a pattern that includes ostentatious disregard for the sensibilities of colored Americans—including his past embrace of Confederate insignia, his opposition to a Virginia holiday honoring Martin Luther King Jr., and his recent outburst (fortunately caught on videotape) in which he referred to a man of Indian descent as a "macaca"—a term he was clearly using for purposes of denigration. But, once we accept the fundamental fact that Allen did use the word, we have to move into the punishment phase of his case. This raises the question: Can a white politician, in twenty-first-century America, ever recover from having used the N-word in his past?

THERE IS NO doubt that the N-word is presumptively offensive. Writing in 1837, Hosea Easton remarked that "nigger" had become "an opprobrious term, employed to impose contempt upon [blacks] as an inferior race." Before and since, embedded in angry shouts and nasty jokes, "nigger" has provided gut-churning accompaniment to countless acts of racially motivated violence, intimidation, and humiliation. But, like any symbol, "nigger" can be put to various uses. More recently, it has been deployed to mock racism. This is what the black comedian and social activist Dick Gregory was up to when he titled the first (and best) of his memoirs *Nigger: An Autobiography*. The N-word is also often used as an ironic gesture of solidarity. Engaging in a form of rhetorical jujitsu, many young blacks have defiantly appropriated "nigger" for their own use, which animates the ongoing insistence of many champions of hip-hop culture that, properly used, there is nothing wrong with *their* N-word. "Nigga," the rap icon Tupac Shakur once proclaimed, is a perfectly acceptable term of self-identification that stands for "Never Ignorant, Gets Goals Accomplished."

Given hip hop's crossover appeal, it was only a matter of time before the issue arose as to whether whites (or other non-blacks) could also permissibly use non-racist versions of "nigger" or its variants. One response was to assert that, while blacks could use the term for purposes of in-group humor or camaraderie, "nigger" is completely verboten to whites. Propounding this position, Michael Eric Dyson maintains that "[n]igger has never been cool when spit from white lips." Another response was a renewed effort to stigmatize all usages of "nigger," regardless of speakers' racial identities. Hence, the Baltimore City Council passed a resolution urging all citizens to refrain from using the N-word for any reason, a position also embraced by the recently established website abolishthenword.com.

But justifiable disgust with racist usages of "nigger" has sometimes led people astray. Every year, controversies arise from efforts to exclude books from public school curricula just because they contain references to the term "nigger." All too often, in censoring books like Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*, opponents of exclusion evince no interest whatsoever in recognizing important distinctions that differentiate racist from non-racist (or even anti-racist) deployments of the N-word. Then there was the infamous episode in which local government employees in Washington, D.C., clamored for the resignation of a high-ranking supervisor who used the term "niggardly," even after being informed that that word (which means stingy) is wholly unrelated to the notorious N-word.

IT'S A SIGN of progress that referring to blacks as "niggers" is now, almost everywhere, a form of political suicide. Recall that, until the '60s, politicians in some locales openly used "nigger" in its derogatory sense without fear of adverse political repercussions. We have traveled some distance from the time when, in Mississippi in 1964—during a successful gubernatorial campaign—Paul Johnson repeatedly joked that the acronym NAACP stood for "Niggers, Apes, Alligators, Coons, and Possums." The publicity about Allen and the N-word has rightfully hurt him politically. His once-commanding lead over his Democratic challenger, Jim Webb, has shrunk considerably, as has his standing as a potential presidential contender in 2008.

What makes Allen's past use of the N-word particularly reprehensible is that he lies about it. I'm sure that there are those who fear that contemporary disgust with racist usage of "nigger" is so intense that a politician in Allen's shoes cannot be honest without sacrificing entirely his political future—a sacrifice some might see as so disproportionate to the initial distant infraction as to justify the "white" lie of false denial. But the revelation that a politician used "nigger" at some point in his past should not doom him or her automatically and terminally to political perdition. People do change. People do make mistakes that they sincerely regret and from which they really do learn. Moreover, it is good policy to encourage honesty and reformation by holding open the prospect of redemption. Most fair-minded voters, regardless of racial identity, will accord respect to a candidate who comes clean about his use of the N-word, who apologizes for it, and who is also in a position to say that his public record offers strong evidence of a genuine repudiation of his previous bad acts.

This is exactly what George Allen has refused to do. He has not come clean about his bigoted vocabulary. He has thus prevented himself from apologizing for it. And his public record is not one that offers any sensible basis for believing that he takes seriously the moral and legal injunction to accord to all persons equal respect, regardless of race.

But perhaps he doesn't have to. After all, his defeat is by no means certain. Leading Republicans have withheld public repudiations of Allen, and conservative commentators have largely portrayed the junior senator from Virginia as merely a victim of "liberal" media. Allen's incumbency, with its winks, code words, and hollow denials, is a bitter reminder that the attitudes that inform and attend the primary historical meaning of "nigger" remain all too evident, even in the highest circles of the U.S. government. ■

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Jerusalem Dispatch

Unwanted Man

BY YOSSI KLEIN HALEVI

"OLMERT, WE FORGIVE YOU," read an unsigned pre–Yom Kippur ad, placed in the newspaper *Maariv* by the amorphous movement to oust Prime Minister Ehud Olmert. "We forgive you for the first defeat in war since the founding of the state of Israel. We forgive you for the penetration of corruption into government. We forgive you for the confused leadership. We forgive you because the job is simply too big for you."

Israelis have seldom been kind to their prime ministers, even the most beloved. David Ben-Gurion ended his career as the head of a small splinter party; Golda Meir was driven from office after the Yom Kippur War; Menachem Begin retired into seclusion after demonstrators hounded him with the daily casualty count from the first Lebanon war. But no Israeli leader has ever lost the nation's trust as quickly and completely as Olmert. Barely six months after his election, he has managed to create a consensus, from left to right, that sees him as the symbol of Israeli corruption and incompetence. In a recent poll, just 7 percent of respondents thought he was fit to govern: It is the lowest recorded figure for any Israeli prime minister. Olmert's party, Kadima, is in free-fall: It has no local branches, almost no membership, and, according to that same poll, would get 14 seats if elections were held today, down from its current 29.

Olmert has been forced to back away from plans for a unilateral West Bank withdawal, the very issue that brought him to power. (Having fought a war in Lebanon and Gaza, the two fronts from which Israel had already unilaterally withdrawn, Israelis are in no mood to consider a third round.) The result is a government without a policy. Olmert's Lebanon strategy, too, is in shambles: Israeli military intelligence is warning that an emboldened Syria is considering war, and Hezbollah is rearming under the cover of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL)—indeed, so far, the only combatants UNIFIL has confronted have been Israeli soldiers.

Meanwhile, Olmert could face several criminal investigations, including allegations that he sold one apartment for an above-market price to a campaign supporter and bought another for a below-market price in exchange for helping a contractor obtain a zoning permit. Even in Israel's politics of contempt, it's hard to recall another prime minister who has been treated with such disdain. During a recent interview with *Maariv*, Olmert was recounting how he had received word that two soldiers had been kidnapped by Hezbollah. And what did you do then, the interviewer asked sarcastically, "call the bank?"—a reference to the Army chief of staff, Dan Halutz, who sold his stock portfolio a few hours before the Lebanon war began.

Yet, aside from looking wan and stooped, Olmert shows no signs of breaking. In a series of interviews with Israeli newspapers on the eve of Rosh Hashanah, Olmert took advantage of the holiday season of introspection and contrition to tell the public that he has nothing to regret and no one to apologize to. He insists that he'll complete his four-year term. And he asserts that Israel won the war—even though army commanders like Ilan Harari, the outgoing chief education officer, say that Israel lost.

Olmert persists in part because he knows, better than most, the unpredictability of Israeli politics. Ariel Sharon, after all, seemed the failed leader of a declining opposition party until Palestinian terrorism resurrected him. In the 2003 elections, Olmert himself couldn't secure a leading slot on the Likud's parliamentary list and considered quitting politics altogether—until Sharon enticed him with the post of deputy prime minister. When Sharon fell into a coma, Olmert fell into the prime minister's office. And, now that the hunger strikers demanding his ouster have gone home and the mass protests against his government have subsided, Olmert is betting on outlasting the public's outrage.

PERSEVERANCE IS INTEGRAL to Olmert's being. When he was a leader of the right-wing Betar youth movement in the 1950s, he and his fellow Betarim were widely treated as outcasts—denounced as fascists for their opposition to socialism and their expansionist territorial dreams. Being an outsider was a mark of pride for Betar, recalls an Olmert childhood friend, Moshe Amirav: "We wanted to be a minority; it's in our genes." The most valued trait in Betar was *tagar*: persistence and struggle. "In the face of every obstacle," went the Betar hymn sung at movement meetings, "a fire may still be lit with the flame of revolt." Though Olmert has long since abandoned Betar's ideology of Greater Israel, he has retained the spirit of *tagar*—for his own, if not the nation's, well-being.

There is some justice to Olmert's claim that he has been unfairly stigmatized. He was, after all, willing to stand up to Hezbollah's provocations—unlike his predecessors, Sharon and Ehud Barak. And there is more to him than the news media stereotype of the crafty lawyer who manages, just barely, to avoid indictment. As mayor of Jerusalem, he made a point of attending the funerals of most of the terrorism victims in the city, and he visited their families. He's a loyal friend: Before becoming prime minister, every Friday Olmert would personally deliver food for the Sabbath to the widow of a political ally killed in a car crash. And he's genuinely tolerant. Even when he was a leader of the Likud's hard-line wing, his family reflected political diversity: His wife, Aliza, a former peace activist, routinely voted against him. The right has spread rumors claiming that some of Olmert's five children didn't serve in the army; in fact, four did. He has had the bad luck to be prime minister at a time of unprecedented revulsion toward the political class generally,

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thanks to an array of ethics scandals. But he's hardly responsible for the alleged sexual misconduct of President Moshe Katsav and ex-Justice Minister Haim Ramon.

Yet Olmert has become the symbol of the traits Israelis loathe in their national character—the self-dealing man who won't let you in on the road as you're trying to change lanes, who takes credit for successes and passes on the blame for failures. Whether or not Olmert deserves the opprobrium, he has lost the public's most basic trust. In the coming months, the prime minister of Israel may need to make the most fateful decision of any Israeli leader since Ben-Gurion declared statehood in 1948: whether to allow Iran's apocalyptic regime to go nuclear if the United States fails to stop it, or else bomb Iranian facilities and risk a retaliation attack of ballistic missiles on Israeli cities. At Israel's most existential moment, it needs a leader whose primary concern isn't his own political survival.

What will finally bring him down? Perhaps a coalition crisis: His partner, Labor leader and Defense Minister Amir Peretz, is even more discredited than Olmert and could soon be ousted from his party's leadership. Or it could be a split within Kadima, in which a rebel faction would support replacing Olmert as prime minister with Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu. Or else more accusations like the one recently made by former Army Chief of Staff Moshe "Bogey" Yaalon, who blamed Olmert for launching a senseless battle in the last two days of the war, one that killed 33 soldiers and whose sole purpose, according to Yaalon, was "spin": to make the prime minister appear decisive.

SHORTLY AFTER THE war ended in August, I visited the protest tent camp set up near the prime minister's office by army reservists demanding that the political and military leadership that ran the war resign. Protesters who, only a few days before, had been fighting in Lebanon wore caps imprinted with the slogan A NATION OF HEROES, A LEADERSHIP OF COWARDS. There was a steady flow of supporters, including a busload of pensioners from the Galilee, who came to thank the soldiers and condemn the prime minister who hadn't let them finish the job. Veterans of the Yom Kippur War who had helped bring down Golda Meir came to offer advice. One father passed around a photograph of his son, who had been killed a few weeks earlier in Lebanon.

For all the evident passion, however, it was clear that the protest movement, at least in its initial phase, was going to fail. No charismatic leaders had emerged among the reservists. Worse, they had split into two factions: A few hundred meters away was a rival tent camp of hunger strikers, who opposed the demand for Olmert's resignation as unrealistic and, instead, were calling merely for a state commission of inquiry into the war. Yet it was obvious, too, that the rage that the reservists had exposed would not subside; that it was only a matter of time before another protest movement emerged; and that, no matter how much *tagar* Olmert mustered, his day of judgment was coming. ■

The next mad cow?

On the Lamb

BY D.T. MAX

IT WAS MEANT to be the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) finest hour. On March 23, 2001, the agency's enforcement agents raided the Mad River Valley, Vermont, sheep farm of an artisanal cheese maker named Linda Faillace. The raid wasn't unexpected—eight months earlier, the agency had filed a "Declaration of Extraordinary Emergency" that declared its right to seize Faillace's 125 Beltex and East Friesian sheep. Their crime was that they were part of the only ovine flock, among approximately eight million sheep in this country, to have come directly from Europe, where mad cow disease is thought to have originated—and the USDA suspected them of harboring the disease themselves.

In the wake of the declaration, Faillace, who describes herself as a "member of the underground food revolution," had insisted her flock was healthy, and she rallied state support. Vermonters do not take kindly to federal intervention, and so, on the day of the raid, protesters blocked the snow-covered driveway to the Faillace farm, hoisting signs that read ILLEGAL SEARCH AND SEIZURE and CRIMES OF THE USDA. But they did little to deter the 27 armed federal agents in flak jackets and 13 USDA specialists who slipped and slid in their loafers as, like latter-day Wile E. Coyotes, they carried off the bleating animals. The flock's destination was Ames, Iowa, the site of the USDA's central lab, where they would be slaughtered and tested for mad cow disease. Like a scene from *Charlotte's Web*, Mary Jo, Linda's eight-year-old niece, cradled one doomed sheep named Kanga in her arms. "The pain was indescribable," recounts Faillace. "[These] innocent animals ... were not only our livelihood, but ... also our beloved companions."

But the USDA had the broader nation's sympathy: What was at stake, the press was assured, was nothing less than the safety of the U.S. food supply. Mad cow, more properly called bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), is one of a family of highly infectious, nearly ineradicable diseases that kill by devouring their victims' brains. Cows get BSE through infected feed, and humans contract it by eating infected cows. At the time of the seizure, BSE in Europe had killed at least 180,000 cows and around 100 people. But one study, ongoing at the time of the Mad River seizure, had successfully transmitted BSE to sheep through feed. This meant that, theoretically, millions of Americans and Euro-

D.T. Max is the author of THE FAMILY THAT COULDN'T SLEEP: A MEDICAL MYSTERY, *a cultural and scientific history of prion diseases.*

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peans could be exposing themselves to a horrible death with every bite of lamb they took.

And, indeed, the initial test results from the Faillace farm seemed to vindicate the USDA. Eleven months after the seizure, in February 2002, the agency announced that two members of the flock tested positive for "an atypical [prion] disease of foreign origin." Linda Detwiler, the head of the mad cow disease working group for the USDA, commented on television that the condition, in which the sheep's brains showed the presence of the deformed prion proteins that are a hallmark of the disease, resembled mad cow disease. The sheep, then, had been, at least potentially, a lethal ticking time bomb—the first cases of mad cow disease in the United States and the first confirmed cases of mad cow in sheep in the world. The USDA declared itself satisfied with its intervention in the appositely named Mad River Valley, and President Bush himself praised the action. Detwiler, who had walked through a gauntlet of signs in Vermont with DR. DEATHWILER on them as she led the assault on Kanga, received a departmental "Heroism" award, went on "Good Morning America," and took a bow. "Let me ask you point-blank: Are you saying that these tests show there is a form of mad cow disease in this country in sheep?" Diane Sawyer asked. "Yes, we are," Detwiler answered.

But Detwiler's answer may have been somewhat premature. Prion science is not like viral or bacterial science—results do not come in a day or two. The only way to conclusively figure out what the Vermont sheep harbored was through a bio-assay—tissue from the culled sheep had to be injected into mice, the mice allowed to sicken and die, and then their tissue examined to see if molecular traces of the disease fit any known condition or represented a new one. The process usually takes anywhere from three months to one year. But, soon after the announcement of the "atypical [prion] disease," the USDA officials let interested parties know that it would likely take much longer. The premier prion disease testing facility in the world, in England, was busy, they said: a comment akin to saying that someone was using the pencil. There were other facilities that could do the work, but the USDA never pursued it. Five years after the raid, the USDA's finest hour is beginning to look like just another example of the agency's frightening incompetence.

LINDA FAILLACE NEVER resumed her career as a sheep farmer: The raid ruined her financially, and she and her husband now run a country store dedicated to locally grown foods. But she remained angry about the USDA's raid and had the good fortune to find a co-defendant with deep pockets—an octogenarian farmer and heir to the AIG fortune named Houghton Freeman, who lived nearby and also had his 200 sheep seized. Freeman was willing to dig into those pockets to fight back

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against what he also saw as a usurpation of private property.

Faillace and Freeman are now in their fourth lawsuit against the government and have spent around $400,000. "It's not about money at all," Faillace says. "It's about showing sheep don't get mad cow disease and not wanting this to happen to other people." She has just published a book called *Mad Sheep: The True Story Behind the USDA's War on a Family Farm*, the cover a photo of Martha, the best-loved sheep in the flock, as Faillace saw her for the last time: through the bars of the USDA trailer. The book does an excellent job of pointing out that the USDA's case, which, in 2001, seemed pretty good, by now seems extraordinarily weak.

One of the spurs for the USDA's raid may have been the criticism it was getting in the wake of the mad cow epidemic in Europe. At the time, the United States had not yet recorded a single case of mad cow disease. The USDA believed that was because of the excellent oversight the agency provided the nation's approximately $60-billion beef industry. But others weren't so sure. Skeptics—including many at public health agencies like the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)—noted that perhaps the reason the USDA hadn't found mad cow in the United States was that it wasn't looking. Whereas the United States tested one in every 18,000 cows for the presence of BSE, European countries tested vastly more. Besides protecting the nation's food supply, the USDA's second task is to protect the meat industry's markets at home and abroad—four former beef lobbyists were among the top appointees at the USDA—and skeptics hinted that perhaps the noteworthy absence of zeal was connected to this fact.

So, in the snowy fields of Vermont, the USDA picked a fight it could not lose. The p.r. risk seemed low and the offense to the beef industry negligible: In the ag world, beef trumps lamb, lamb trumps cheese, and just about everything trumps a bunch of long-hairs making artisanal cheese in Vermont. To make sure everyone got the message that the USDA was supremely vigilant, the agents even demanded the surrender of the family dog and llama. Kanga and friends were placed aboard the lethal trailer and the USDA agents poured bleach on the tires of the vehicle to remind the folks at home of the extraordinary threat posed by the prion particle (ordinary methods of disinfection don't harm it; only bleach can kill it). "The truck had never been on the farm. It had only been on the road," remembers Faillace. "It was a useless gesture."

On a technical level, the case has not withstood the test of time. The Rubinstein Lab at the Institute for Basic Research on Staten Island, the lab where the key tests on the Vermont flocks were done, has since been closed for multiple violations of lab standards, throwing the results into doubt. And, since the raid, the European work suggesting that sheep can get mad cow disease has been discredited, because it turned out the researchers mixed up their supply of sheep brains with their supply of cow brains. (Detwiler says that the relevant tests were done before the contamination and that the decision to seize the Freeman and Faillace sheep was not motivated by the discredited European study.)

In fact, it was entirely possible the Faillace flock didn't have mad cow at all, but a prion disease, enzootic to sheep, called scrapie. Scrapie has been known for 200 years, and, though it is highly contagious among sheep (and possesses the spectacular symptom that affected animals rub their coats off in a mad frenzy before collapsing and dying), it does not seem to pass on to humans who eat infected lamb. Scrapie is still a highly contagious disease that mandates seizure of affected animals and quarantine of their flocks, but not the removal of all the animals. In addition, one of the bio-assays undertaken on one of Freeman's sheep thought to have a prion disease turned out negative in 2001. If that turns out to be the case with the Faillace sheep, Detwiler, who, soon after the Battle of Mad River Valley, left the USDA to consult for various food corporations, might go from hero to goat— and the department with her.

This would be consistent with what we have learned about the USDA since Mad River. A series of botched BSE investigations in the past three years has severely injured the agency's credibility. Mad cow has come to North America, eleven cases to date—"an outbreak," according to Larry Schonberger, a CDC official who monitors the threat of prion diseases to humans in the United States. Of those eleven, three were found in the United States, and the agency behaved ineptly in all three investigations. In a Texas case, for instance, the agency neglected to report a positive result on a test because it considered the protocol experimental. ("The laboratory folks just never mentioned it to anyone higher up," a USDA spokesman explained.) Sixty-five nations have, at one point or another, closed their doors to U.S. beef imports in the last three years.

But the fundamental mystery of why the USDA never did the bio-assay test remains unanswered. One government public health official said that, in his view, the USDA would probably never do the bio-assay. "They don't want to be embarrassed by their being wrong," he said. Jim Rogers, the agency spokesperson, disputes this. He says that, in fact, the USDA is finally about to sign a contract with Great Britain's testing center. If it happens, other government officials interested in human safety will be happy to hear it. "Periodically, I ask the USDA: Is it going forward?" says Schonberger. "And they say they still have the samples in their freezer. We supported the move to seize the Vermont sheep, and we would be interested in knowing what the agent is, and who might be at risk. Was it BSE, or was it not?" When asked to explain the agency's multiyear delay, Rogers, who was at Mad River Valley, ascribed it to "government craziness" and the fact that Kanga and friends are now safely disposed of: "After the sheep were destroyed, they were not a high priority for testing because the threat was eliminated," he says. Meanwhile, three comparable bio-assays are planned in Europe using sheep culled there and suspected of having BSE. These tests may give the world reassuring or unsettling results. But one thing is for sure: If there is a mad sheep epidemic, the USDA will be the last to know it. ■

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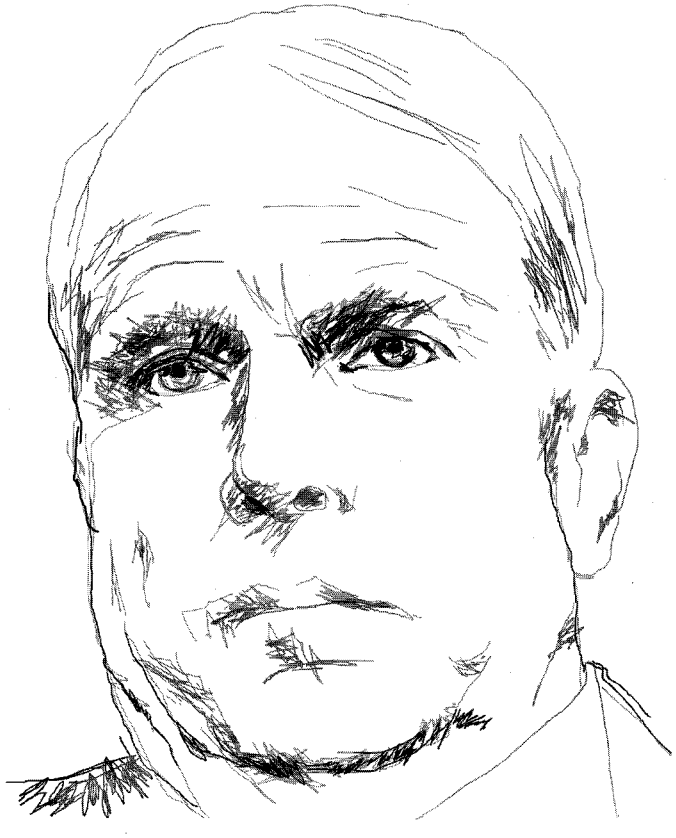
The making of an überhawk.

Neo-McCain

BY JOHN B. JUDIS

I HAVE LIKED John McCain ever since I met him almost a decade ago. At the time, I was writing a profile of then-Senator Fred Thompson, who was rumored to be considering a run for the presidency. I had been playing phone tag with the press secretaries of senators friendly with Thompson and was getting nowhere. I decided that, instead of calling McCain's office, I would drop by. I spoke to one of his aides, who asked me whether I had time to see the senator then. To my amazement, I was ushered into McCain's office, where, without staffers present, he answered my questions about Thompson.

Talking to a senator in this manner, and on such short notice, is unheard of in Washington. Senators like to stand on ceremony, and they also like to surround themselves with solicitous and protective aides. But McCain is different. It is a difference that he refined after being caught up in the Keating Five scandal in the early '90s, but it fits his personality and jibes with his public-minded advocacy of campaign finance reform.



JOE HEROUN

McCain is also another rarity in Washington: a centrist by conviction rather than by design. His political philosophy places him closer to Theodore Roosevelt than to his other idols, Barry Goldwater and Ronald Reagan: more noblesse oblige than libertarian populism or business conservatism. He says he favors "a minimum of government regulation in our lives," but what really matters is whether a policy or business practice is in the national interest. If it isn't, he'll use the power of the government to change it. Goldwater would not have voted for a bill tightening controls over the tobacco industry, and Reagan would have balked at curbing pollution. McCain has backed both. Liberals have recently chided him for wooing his party's evangelical base, but these have been nominal efforts. McCain pronounced himself in favor of teaching creationism as a theory; but he also devotes a chapter of his latest book to the genius of Charles Darwin. He gave a commencement speech at Jerry Falwell's Liberty University; but, in a subtle rebuke to Christian conservatives, he spoke entirely about foreign policy. Earlier this year, he voted to block a constitutional amendment banning gay marriage.

McCain's idiosyncratic approach to party politics also makes him an outlier. His commitment to bipartisanship is real—he worked with Russ Feingold on campaign finance reform, Ted Kennedy on immigration reform, and Joe Lieberman on global warming—as is his relish for battling his own party's leaders. Last month, when Bush and his congressional allies were using a bill flouting the Geneva Conventions to paint Democrats as soft on terrorism, McCain, along with John Warner and Lindsey Graham, blocked the measure and insisted on a compromise. True, the compromise was flawed. Still, it undermined the administration's efforts to exploit the war on terrorism for political purposes.

McCain has one other attribute that separates him from many of his peers in Washington: He is willing to change his mind. This may be his most admirable quality; yet it is also frequently overlooked, probably because it seems to contradict McCain's reputation for stubbornness, even nastiness—a reputation his right-wing opponents are all too happy to speculate about.

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"Everyone knows McCain has a temperament problem, but no one is going to say anything about it," one prominent Washington conservative complains. Yet the most distinctive aspect of McCain's temperament is not his anger; rather, it is his penchant for reconsidering both old enmities and old convictions. Witness his work with John Kerry on normalizing relations with Vietnam, as well as his collaboration on campaign finance reform with activist Fred Wertheimer, who had sharply criticized McCain during the Keating Five scandal.

Nowhere has McCain's willingness to question his own previous assumptions been more dramatic than on foreign policy. When he first arrived in Washington, he was essentially a realist, arguing that U.S. military power should only be used to protect vital national interests. Since the late '90s, however, he has joined forces with neoconservatives to support a crusade aimed at overthrowing hostile and undemocratic regimes—by force, if necessary—and installing in their place democratic, pro-American governments. Unlike many Republicans, he enthusiastically backed Bill Clinton's intervention in Kosovo. Moreover, he was pushing for Saddam Hussein's forcible overthrow years before September 11—at a time when George W. Bush was still warning against the arrogant use of American might.

And therein lies my McCain dilemma—and, perhaps, yours. If, like me, you believe that the war in Iraq has been an unmitigated disaster, then you are likely disturbed by McCain's early and continuing support for it—indeed, he advocates sending *more* troops to that strife-torn land—and by his advocacy of an approach to Iran that could lead to another fruitless war. At the same time, he has shown an admirable willingness to reevalute his views when events have proved them wrong. The question, then, comes down to this: Is John McCain capable of changing his mind about a subject very close to his heart—again?

TO BEGIN TO answer that question, you have to understand McCain's philosophical evolution on foreign policy. Not surprisingly, that evolution has everything to do with Vietnam.

McCain comes from a long line of military men. His father and grandfather were both four-star admirals. Attempting to follow in their footsteps, McCain attended Annapolis and, after graduating in 1958, became a naval aviator. By his own admission, he was brash, sometimes insubordinate—a maverick within a profession grounded in hierarchy. He longed to prove himself by going to war. Having absorbed his father and grandfather's stories about World War II, he had no doubt that the United States would triumph. "I believed that militarily we could prevail in whatever conflict we were involved in," he told me.

McCain also acquired from his father a particular view of American power. The elder McCain admired the British Empire and conceived of the United States playing an analogous role in world affairs. In 1965, he commanded the U.S. invasion of the Dominican Republic, which blocked a previously ousted government—one that the Johnson administration believed was too friendly with Fidel Castro—from regaining power. The invasion was unpopular in both the United States and the Dominican Republic; but, afterwards, McCain's father said, "People may not love you for being strong when you have to be, but they respect you for it and learn to behave themselves when you are."

McCain's faith in this approach would be tested in Vietnam. He began bombing runs over North Vietnam in mid-1967, at a time when the Johnson administration was restricting the targets American pilots could hit. McCain soon became disillusioned with this strategy. He and his fellow pilots regarded their civilian leaders as "complete idiots" who "didn't have the least notion of what it took to win the war." In October 1967, McCain was shot down over Hanoi. He was imprisoned and tortured for five and a half years, and he emerged thoroughly chastened in his views on war and American might.

Like his father, who commanded U.S. forces in the Pacific during the last years of the Vietnam war, McCain continued to defend the decision to intervene—most notably in an article he wrote for *U.S. News & World Report* after his release—but he took a fairly narrow view of when wars were worth fighting. During a year spent studying the origins of the Vietnam conflict at the National War College, McCain began to develop a version of what would later be called the Powell Doctrine. He insisted that any intervention had to be demonstrably in the national interest, and he defined national interest in a limited way. Resisting global communism qualified; overthrowing brutal tyrannies or rescuing their victims did not. "The American people and Congress now appreciate that we are neither omniscient nor omnipotent," McCain would later tell the *Los Angeles Times*, "and they are not prepared to commit U.S. troops to combat unless there is a clear U.S. national security interest involved. If we do become involved in combat, that involvement must be of relatively short duration and must be readily explained to the man in the street in one or two sentences."

The McCain who arrived in Washington in 1983, after winning a House seat from Arizona, was still a hawk, but a very cautious one. He had abandoned the gung-ho idealism of the early cold war for a more tempered realism. And the U.S. defeat in Vietnam was still very much on his mind.

MCCAIN'S FIRST APPLICATION of his newfound realism came in September 1983, when he had to vote on a bill to extend the U.S. military presence in Lebanon. A year earlier, in the wake of Israel's invasion of Lebanon, the Reagan administration had sent Marines to Beirut to help oversee the evacuation of the Palestine Liberation Organization. But the Marines had lingered in Lebanon to aid the new government, which was fighting local militias as well as Syrian forces. Republican and Democratic leaders lined up in favor of extending the U.S. stay there, but the freshman McCain, to their displeasure, declared his opposition.

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McCain called for a gradual U.S. withdrawal from Lebanon. He argued that there were not enough U.S. forces to protect the government. The United States could introduce more troops, he said, but that wouldn't be justified because there was no "clear U.S. interest at stake." McCain's concerns, of course, proved prescient—a month later, suicide bombers blew up Marine barracks in Beirut, killing 241 Americans and forcing a U.S. withdrawal—but, at the time of the September vote, his stance brought him only grief as Republican leaders, infuriated by his dissent, snubbed him in the halls.

The second major challenge to McCain's post-Vietnam worldview came when Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990. McCain, who had been elected to the Senate in 1986, shared the Bush administration's determination to protect Saudi Arabia and oust Iraqi forces from Kuwait. But, in the beginning, McCain played the cautious realist. He was concerned primarily about Saddam Hussein monopolizing the region's oil, and he was initially skeptical of the need to use U.S. ground forces. "I think that we have got to make use of the advantages that we have, and that is through the air," he told Judy Woodruff in early August. Later that month, he warned in a *Los Angeles Times* interview, "If you get involved in a major ground war in the Saudi desert, I think support will erode significantly. Nor should it be supported. We cannot even contemplate, in my view, trading American blood for Iraqi blood."

During Clinton's first term, McCain remained wary of sending troops overseas. He called for bringing U.S. forces home from Somalia and opposed intervening in Haiti. He also backed the administration's initial refusal to commit forces to Bosnia, where Serbs were engaged in a campaign of ethnic cleansing against the Muslim and Croat populations. McCain argued that, because the conflict did not bear on America's "vital national interests," it did not justify the use of force. Moreover, McCain doubted whether American power could really do any good in Bosnia. U.S. efforts in the Balkans, he lamented in May 1995, were "doomed to failure from the beginning, when we believed that we could keep peace in a place where there was no peace."

Given McCain's stance on Bosnia, one might have expected him to caution Clinton to stay out of Kosovo as well. Instead, by October 1998—five months before NATO would begin bombing Serbia in response to atrocities committed in Kosovo—McCain was telling CNN that he was "not in opposition to taking military action" to deal with a "humanitarian problem here of tens of thousands of innocent people dying." What had changed?

MCCAIN'S EVOLUTION DID not take place overnight. According to people close to him, the senator's outlook had begun to shift in the early '90s, when he started to take an interest in democracy promotion and human rights. In 1993, McCain became chairman of the International Republican Institute, a government-funded group that promotes democracy and capitalism overseas. "We were all intoxicated by the fall of the Soviet Union and the collapse of its empire," he says.

There was another factor, too. Haunted by the American defeat in Vietnam, McCain had been reluctant to see troops deployed abroad. But his brother Joe says that the American victory in the first Gulf war restored the senator's confidence in U.S. power, allowing him to again contemplate military interventions. "Once the chess pieces were back on the board, then he thought he would play chess," Joe McCain says.

And then there was the shock of Srebrenica, where Serb forces murdered thousands of Bosnians in July 1995. Its full impact on his worldview may not have been immediate, but, today, McCain recalls the massacre as a key moment in his evolution on foreign policy. "My reluctance was eradicated by Srebrenica," he says. "I was belatedly aware of the terrible things going on there and that the only way we were going to solve it was militarily."

Yet, for a time, McCain held back, possibly because he lacked confidence in the Clinton administration. Days after Srebrenica, he said, "We cannot make a plausible argument to the American people that our security is so gravely threatened in Bosnia that it requires the sacrifice, in great numbers, of our sons and daughters to defend." When the Clinton administration successfully negotiated the Dayton peace accords in November, McCain initially opposed sending American peacekeepers to help enforce it. After Clinton promised the troops without consulting Congress, McCain relented and supported efforts to secure funding. Still, he joined other Republicans in insisting that U.S. forces in Bosnia have an "exit strategy" and not engage in "nation building."

But that was the last time McCain would express significant skepticism about U.S. intervention. By 1997, his friend William Cohen was secretary of defense, and McCain was, to paraphrase his brother, ready to play chess. The first visible sign of a change in McCain's worldview came on Iraq. During the first Gulf war, McCain had backed President Bush's decision not to advance on Baghdad. But, in November 1997, he announced on Fox News that it had been a mistake not to oust Saddam during the war, and he called upon the Clinton administration to set up an Iraqi government in exile. The following fall—in the face of opposition from both the Pentagon and the State Department—McCain cosponsored the Iraq Liberation Act, which committed the United States to overthrowing Saddam's regime and to funding opposition groups. McCain welcomed Ahmed Chalabi, leader of the Iraqi National Congress (INC), to Washington and pressured the administration to give him money. When General Anthony Zinni cast doubt upon the effectiveness of the Iraqi opposition, McCain rebuked him at a hearing of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

The second, and perhaps clearest, indication that McCain was changing his outlook came in his response to the crisis in Kosovo. As in Bosnia, Serb forces were committing ethnic cleansing and atrocities but did not pose a direct military or economic threat to the United States. Yet, this time, when

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McCain chided Clinton, it was for using American power too cautiously. "The president of the United States," he said in May 1999, "is prepared to lose a war rather than do the hard work, the politically risky work, of fighting it as the leader of the greatest nation on Earth should fight when our interests and our values are imperiled." Note the word "values" alongside the word "interests." Clearly, this was a new McCain.

To be sure, Vietnam still loomed large in his worldview. But the shadow of defeat in Vietnam had lifted, allowing McCain to regain the expansive view of America's power and responsibility that he had inherited from his father. McCain was still using the example of Vietnam, but to argue for bolder—rather than more cautious—application of U.S. power. "We're now seeing things that are echoes of the Vietnam war," he complained in April 1999. "Targets being selected by the president of the United States; restraints on where and when we hit those targets; and, perhaps most importantly of all, an outright commitment that we will not use ground troops as necessary."

He also dropped his opposition to open-ended commitment of U.S. troops and to nation-building, which, for most Republicans, had become synonymous with everything that was wrong with Clinton's foreign policy. "Despite the unacceptable circumstances of the weak and endangered peace in Kosovo," he said on the Senate floor in March 2000, "it is infinitely preferable to the widespread atrocities committed during the course of Serbian aggression, atrocities that would surely reoccur were NATO to fail in our current mission."

McCain's position made sense. If U.S. forces could prevent atrocities without becoming bogged down in a long war and occupation, why shouldn't they? And, if they could encourage more democratic forms of government, why not do that as well? But what succeeded in Kosovo—where the United States was intervening as part of NATO and had no intention of single-handedly occupying and running a country—would not work everywhere. Iraq would soon expose the perils of an overly aggressive idealism. Which is where my qualms with the new McCain begin.

UNTIL THE LATE '90s, McCain's foreign policy consisted largely of lessons from the past that he applied on a piecemeal basis. In 1998, when *The Weekly Standard* asked what kind of foreign policy he would practice if elected president, he responded, "The first thing I'd do is convene the best minds I know of in the field of foreign policy, and that would include members of previous Democratic and Republican administrations. I'd have [Zbigniew] Brzezinski, Jim Baker, [Brent] Scowcroft, Tom Pickering, [Henry] Kissinger, Warren Christopher—and I'm sure others. I'd say, 'Look, let's figure out where we are, where we need to go, what our conceptual framework is. Let's work out a cohesive foreign policy.'" That wasn't much of an answer.

But, in the months and years that followed, McCain, seeking to differentiate his views from those of other Republican presidential aspirants and from the growing isolationism of House Republicans, would place his new interventionist instincts within a larger ideological framework. That ideological framework was neoconservatism. McCain began reading *The Weekly Standard* and conferring with its editors, particularly Bill Kristol. Kristol is predictably modest about his influence on the Arizona senator, although he acknowledges, "I talked to McCain on the phone and compared notes." But when McCain wanted to hire a new legislative aide, his chief of staff, Mark Salter—himself a former aide to neoconservative Jeane Kirkpatrick—consulted with Kristol, who recommended a young protégé named Daniel McKivergan. Marshall Wittmann, one of Kristol's closest friends, became a key adviser during McCain's presidential campaign. Randy Scheunemann, who had drafted the Iraq Liberation Act and was on the board of Kristol's Project for a New American Century, became McCain's foreign policy adviser. One person who has worked closely with Kristol says of Kristol and McCain, "They are exceptionally, exceptionally close."

The senator's embrace of neoconservatism was accompanied by a reevaluation of his childhood hero, Theodore Roosevelt. McCain had long admired Roosevelt's adventurous spirit, but Kristol—as well as other neoconservative writers like Robert Kagan and David Brooks—was busy building the former president into something more: a model for "national greatness conservatism," a philosophy that linked the development of American character to the exercise of power overseas. Wittmann, a Roosevelt devotee who currently runs a website called *The Bull Moose*, gave McCain pieces by Kristol, Kagan, and Brooks on Roosevelt, as well as writings by Roosevelt himself. McCain began referring to Roosevelt in interviews, and Wittmann and Salter began working Rooseveltian themes into his speeches. The result was a growing emphasis on America's responsibility to transform the world.

McCain unveiled his new approach in a March 1999 speech at Kansas State University. The speech—which Wittmann, Salter, and Scheunemann all contributed to—echoed neoconservative themes. Long gone was the McCain who had worried about U.S. overreach. "The United States is the indispensable nation because we have proven to be the greatest force for good in human history," McCain said, adding that "we have every intention of continuing to use our primacy in world affairs for humanity's benefit." In an earlier essay, Kristol and Kagan had described Republican isolationism as "pinched." McCain now described it as "cramped." The centerpiece of the speech was a strategy that McCain called "rogue-state rollback." Scheunemann says he invented the term, adapting it from the conservative critics of 1950s cold war containment. According to this strategy, the United States would back "indigenous and outside forces that desire to overthrow the odious regimes that rule" illiberal states. At the head of this list of regimes was Saddam Hussein's.

Three years later, as debate broke out over whether to invade Iraq, McCain put himself squarely on the side of Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, and the neoconservatives. Like

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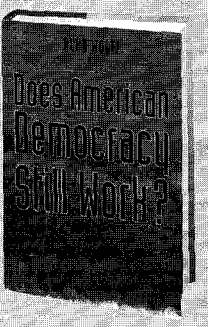

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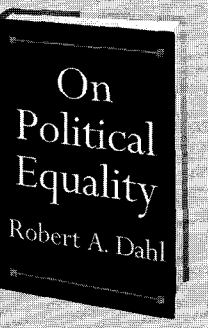

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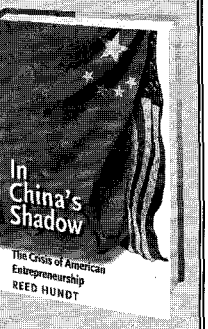

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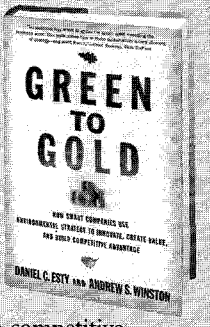

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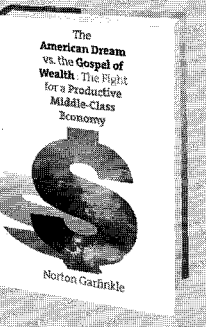

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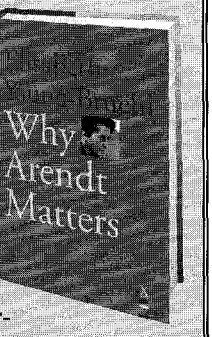

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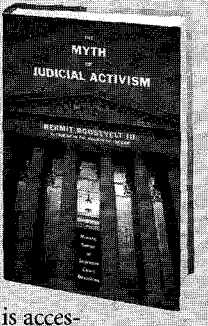

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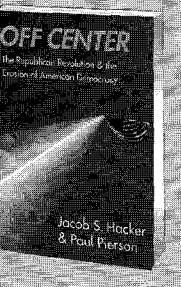

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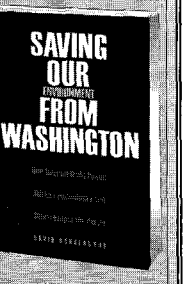

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them, McCain evinced a blithe optimism about America's ability to transform Iraq. Asked by Chris Matthews in March 2003 whether the Iraqis would treat Americans as liberators, McCain replied, "Absolutely, absolutely." Echoing *The Weekly Standard*, he also promoted the most alarmist versions of the threat posed by Saddam, insisting that "Saddam Hussein is on a crash course to construct a nuclear weapon" and that "the interaction we know to have occurred between members of Al Qaeda and Saddam's regime may increasingly take the form of active cooperation to target the United States." And he indulged wildly optimistic scenarios about how the war might liberalize the Middle East, arguing that "regime change in Iraq" could result in "demand for self-determination" throughout the region.

As the war unfolded, McCain remained a Chalabi booster. With the Iraqi military crumbling in early April, McCain signed a letter with four other Republican senators complaining that Chalabi's INC was not being funded. Appearing on "Good Morning America," he argued for "bringing in Chalabi and the Iraqi National Congress as soon as possible." And, though he would later criticize the Bush administration for giving the public "too rosy a scenario" about postwar Iraq, McCain was, in fact, a major player in this deception. In May, he wrote, "Thanks to a war plan that represented a revolutionary advance in military science, to the magnificent performance of our armed forces, and to the firm resolve of the President, the war in Iraq succeeded beyond the most optimistic expectations."

For McCain, disillusionment would begin to set in after he traveled to Iraq in August 2003. He returned home convinced that more troops were needed, but, in a meeting with Rumsfeld, his advice was dismissed. *The Weekly Standard* and McCain began a campaign for more troops—and against Rumsfeld. The arguments echoed what McCain had said decades earlier: that the Vietnam war had been lost because of ineffective civilian leadership. Now he was making the same charge about Iraq.

Yet, even as the administration resisted his call for more troops, McCain continued to insist that the war was being won. After the January 2005 elections, which Sunnis boycotted, McCain said, "I feel wonderful. I feel that the Iraqi people, by going to the polls in the numbers that they did, authenticated what the president said in his inaugural speech: that all people seek freedom and democracy and want to govern themselves." As late as this July, McCain was assuring viewers of "The Early Show" on CBS that "most of Iraq is pretty well under control."

In short, McCain's record on Iraq does not inspire confidence. He was wrong about Chalabi, he was wrong about Iraq's ties to Al Qaeda and WMD, he was wrong about the reaction of Iraqis to the invasion, and he was wrong about the effects on the wider Muslim world. As McCain prepares to run for president, it's worth asking: Does he understand that he made mistakes? Does he draw any lessons from these mistakes? And is he once again willing—as he was during the '90s, when Srebrenica laid bare the steep price of realism—to adjust his worldview accordingly?

I VISITED MCCAIN on a hot summer afternoon in Washington and was shown into his office. This time, both his press aides were in attendance and were taking notes. I hadn't seen McCain in three years and had heard that he had aged significantly, but I thought he appeared to be in good shape. Like white-haired Barbara Bush, McCain, at one point, seemed older than his peers. But now, at age 69, he seems younger. The scar down his face from an operation for melanoma in 2000 is less pronounced than it once was. And he continues to have the best political voice—husky and commanding, without being condescending—since Ronald Reagan.

I asked McCain whether he had taken lessons from the Iraq war similar to the kinds of lessons he drew from Vietnam. He quickly invoked the need for more troops. "The lesson is almost the Powell Doctrine," he said. "Almost. Every smart person I knew said ... in order to control this country there is almost a formula of the number of troops that are required."

I told him a story I had heard about the eminent British military historian, Sir Michael Howard. Speaking ten years ago at the Library of Congress, Howard, who had supported the war in Vietnam, was asked whether he still believed that the United States should have intervened. Howard reportedly replied, "It's a good thing you lost that war. Because if you had won, you'd still be there." McCain laughed at the story, but brushed aside its point. Instead, he returned to another tactical analogy with Vietnam: "One of the things that bothers me about Vietnam, I mean Iraq, is these grand sweeps that we are doing in urban areas ... instead of clear-and-hold, which [General Creighton] Abrams employed in Vietnam and enjoyed a degree of success." McCain was saying that, if the United States would employ Abrams's strategy in Iraq, we might yet achieve the success that has eluded us.

McCain wasn't willing to concede that there was any flaw in the basic strategy of taking over and attempting to transform an Arab country highly sensitive to Western domination. I told McCain I thought that he failed to appreciate the power of nationalism, either in Vietnam or Iraq. "I hope I have a strong appreciation," McCain replied. "I think it is fundamental. The Ukraine revolution—they had their revolution to divorce themselves from Russia. I think it was the same thing in Georgia. Nationalism was the first thing that caused the breakup of the Soviet Union. I hope I place sufficient emphasis on nationalism." But McCain did not address longstanding Arab resistance to Western occupation—whatever the occupier's expressed motives.

I asked whether he had second thoughts about the case for war that he and the administration had made. I asked about his support of Chalabi in 1998. Hadn't Zinni been right about Chalabi and the INC? "I never supported Chalabi, per se," he said. "I supported getting Iraqis to stand up and help in the liberation of their country. Was I too enamored with the INC? I would say yes. I would say yes." He

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also conceded that he "underestimated the difficulty of bringing democracy to a people who had been driven to the ground and oppressed in such a brutal fashion."

McCain has blamed the misinformation that the public received before the war on a "colossal intelligence failure." But hadn't Bush officials, I pointed out, exaggerated and distorted what they knew? I read McCain excerpts from Cheney's March 16, 2003 "Meet the Press" appearance in which he claimed that Saddam "has a long-standing relationship with various terrorist groups, including the Al Qaeda organization" and had "reconstituted nuclear weapons." Isn't it true, I asked McCain, that Cheney didn't *know* these things, but rather asserted them in the face of considerable evidence to the contrary—for instance, from the International Atomic Energy Agency and the CIA? In response, McCain got a little testy. "I would remind you," he said, "that every intelligence service in the West shared the same view. That is compelling. When the French believed that, then it has weight. The French, the Germans, and the Israelis believed the same thing." (In fact, they didn't share Cheney's view that Iraq had reconstituted its nuclear program.)

I asked McCain about U.S. policy toward Iran. He had said previously that the only thing "worse than the United States exercising a military option" would be "Iran having nuclear weapons." This suggested that he favored a preventive strike. Citing Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's statements about Israel, he told me, "We haven't taken the military option off the table, but we should make it clear that is the very last option, only if we become convinced that they are about to acquire those weapons to use against Israel." Did that mean, I asked, that Ahmadinejad's statements about Israel made it unacceptable for Iran to acquire the sheer capability to use nuclear weapons? At this point, McCain seemed to back off. "I think that if they are capable with their repeatedly stated intention, that doesn't mean I would go to war even then. That means we have to exhaust every possible option. Going to the United Nations, working with our European allies. If we were going to impose sanctions, I would wait and see whether those sanctions were effective or not. I did not mean it as a declaration of war the day they acquired weapons."

As our hour was drawing to a close, I told McCain that, from what I had learned, he had been very influenced by the neoconservatism of Kristol, Kagan, and *The Weekly Standard*. "I don't know whether I fit that label or not," McCain replied. He added that he also talks to Brent Scowcroft and Henry Kissinger. I asked him whether he had ever had any major disagreements with Kristol, Kagan, or the magazine itself. "I am sure there have been issues that we have disagreed on," he said, "but I think, generally speaking, I agree with and respect them enormously. I would be glad to go back and look at it."

I saw McCain once again this fall. I wanted to find out whether he had modified any of his positions, but I could detect little change. I asked him about a statement he had made arguing that Bush couldn't increase troop strength in Iraq because it would be impossible to "sell that" to Americans. This made me wonder whether McCain had abandoned his own call for more troops. But, during our interview, he said he wanted to "retract" that statement. "If I were president, if I thought that was still necessary, I would risk the presidency, because I would make the case if I thought it was necessary to prevail," he said. McCain's insistence on this point suggests that he still hasn't learned any lessons from our misadventure in Iraq.

THAT'S TOO BAD, because, if McCain were to reevaluate his positions on the Middle East, he might make a very effective president. He has the ability to lead and a good sense, domestically, of where the country ought to go. Indeed, I talked to several liberals who know McCain and who opposed the Iraq war but who still wouldn't mind seeing him in the White House. Gary Hart laments McCain's embrace of the neocons, but still likes the idea of a McCain presidency and was worried that his enthusiasm might "sink his chances." A former top aide to a leading Democratic presidential contender admitted being ready to pull the lever for McCain in 2008: "I would rather have someone standing up for their point of view than trimming their sails like Hillary [Clinton] or John [Kerry] are. A lot of my friends think that, too."

Part of McCain's attraction for me and other opponents of the Iraq war is that his hawkishness would give him the credibility to sell a diplomatic alternative to the imbroglio that Bush has created in the Middle East. Indeed, he is probably the best equipped of all the potential presidential candidates to extricate the United States from the ditch into which it has fallen. But doing so would require him to break substantially with his own recent history.

During our interview, I asked McCain whether he had changed his opinion that the Vietnam war was winnable—a view he had reaffirmed most recently in his memoir, *Faith of My Fathers*. His response surprised me. "I would say [it was a] noble cause," he said. "I still believe that. But do I believe it was winnable? I am not sure." If McCain is willing to reconsider his most basic belief about Vietnam, he could still change his mind about Iraq. It's true that little he said to me suggests he will adjust his worldview in the near future, but McCain has surprised his critics before. Perhaps he will do so again. ■

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Life Forces

ROBERT PENN WARREN was a poet who also wrote novels. His poetry, much of which is lovely, won two Pulitzer Prizes, and he was the first U.S. poet laureate. But today he is probably best remembered for his novels, particularly **ALL THE KING'S MEN**, which was published in 1946, won a Pulitzer in 1947, was filmed in 1949, and has now been filmed again. To approach this second film with regard for Warren's poetry, which I certainly have, is to sit for two hours in moderate discomfort. The film isn't dreadful: it is just generally disappointing.

ALL THE KING'S MEN
(Columbia)

49 UP
(First Run)

The story follows the career of a Louisiana politician, Willie Stark (a character suggested by the once-irrepressible Huey Long), who rhetorically swashbuckles his way into the governor's chair and is assassinated by a physician whose sister and father have suffered at the governor's hand. All of this is followed by a young newspaperman, Jack Burden, who narrates and partakes and supplies an ethical ledge from which the greasy goings-on are observed. The screenplay by Steven Zaillian strives to transmute the observed drama of the novel into an observed drama on screen. This mode is much less congenial to film, but at least Zaillian knew the difficulty and tried to heat as many scenes as possible to immediacy.

Zaillian, who also directed, is not as deft in that job. He leans on intense close-ups in big scenes; such close-ups of course can help, but when overused, they print the film in italics and deprive the actors of body language. He also overdoes "symbolic" frames: as cars move ominously along a road, we see roadside crosses; an obese pol at a carnival is caught with a Ferris wheel behind him that mimics both his shape and his frivolity. And Zaillian lapses into the hoariest of tricks—a camera between railway tracks as a train roars toward it and over it.

He probably was not responsible—not solely, anyway—for the casting, but whoever was responsible blundered by giving the role of Willie to Sean Penn. Penn is an introverted actor who depends largely on contained fire, with outbursts. He has a tough time here with this extrovert whose loud love of everyone he meets is his stock-in-trade. Penn on the platform (complete with southern accent, of course), trying to communicate heart-to-heart and *fortissimo*, gesturing weakly and incompletely, is simply not the force he is meant to be. It is hard to believe that this man could, in five years, have charmed his way to the political peak; and it is hard to believe that a possible presidential jewel is shattered when he is killed.

Kate Winslet, talented though she is, can find no real role to play as a young woman who is involved with both Willie and Jack. Mark Ruffalo, as her physician brother, tries seriously to create a complex character out of a few shards. James Gandolfini, better known as Tony Soprano, here plays Willie's heavyset sidekick and sweats obligingly. The only interesting performance—admittedly in the biggest and best role—is Jude Law's as Jack Burden. Constantly he conveys that he is feeling and thinking things that he is either too shocked or too amused to voice. Social class still pertains in the South—in the 1930s, anyway (see Stanley and Blanche in *A Streetcar Named Desire*). Law creates a Jack who, because the world is as it is, is slumming.

When the novel was published and the first film appeared, the memory of Huey Long was still vivid enough to give the work some sting, and the notion of a quasi-dictator rising above the people by pretending to be 500 percent one of them still seemed awesomely possible. Neither of those matters exists any more.

Once I took Warren to an avant-garde Molière production at Yale. During the first intermission he was taciturn. During the second intermission he smiled broadly. "I see," he said. "It's all a spoof." Would he have thought the same of this new film? I don't think so: it's just not bad enough.

For the last forty-two years, many filmgoers have counted the passage of time in seven-year clumps. Beginning in 1964, the English director Michael Apted has been involved in documentaries that follow the lives of a group of English children who have of course become different people as the series has progressed. *Seven Up* was the first, followed by *7 Plus Seven*, *21 Up*, and so forth. Now we have, believe it or not, **49 UP**, with twelve of the people whom we first saw as youngsters now on the brink of half a century.

Ever since the very first still photograph in 1822, people have known that time could be trapped, like a butterfly pinned. All of us have photos of ourselves and others in past years, and the pictures make us all feel the same melancholy or amusement or glow. By now many people have home movies that provide the same feelings aggrandized. But Apted's films do much more. The segments are so cleverly arranged—he includes past pictorial references for each of the people we revisit—that now there is something almost mystical involved. It is as if a wizard were giving us an overview of forty-two years that mortals were possibly not meant to see.

Apted, off-screen, questions his subjects evocatively. Lives become as open as is possible in these brief chapters. Some of the time-collapses are easily ironic. A woman is seen with her family, followed by a clip of her at fourteen saying that she doesn't want children. All of the stories are interesting because of the time tegument, but especially striking are Tony and Neil. Tony was a scruffy, mischievous East End kid who, as we

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see, became a jockey, a cab driver, a father, and an occasional bit-part television actor; now, as a grandfather, he is becoming a man of business. Neil, at one point, was homeless. Deliberately, more or less, he was wandering up and down the west coast of Scotland. Now he is on a town council.

Apted is a busy director in between these documentaries, the maker of *Coal Miner's Daughter* and *Gorky Park* and one of the James Bond pictures. But these "Up" films are his unique contribution. On to *56 Up*. ■

DAVID HAJDU ON MUSIC
The Lonesome Road

I CANNOT SAY I HAD THE PLEASURE of hearing Susannah McCorkle sing. I heard her perform many times—at least a dozen, perhaps twenty times from the spring of 1981, when my late friend Roy Hemming, a pedigreed cabaret hound, first brought me to see her at Michael's Pub, to the autumn of 2000, when she had her final run at the Oak Room in the Algonquin. I went to three of her last ten shows. On all those occasions, I rarely drew from McCorkle mere pleasure, but derived many other things of value—illumination, wonderment, flashes of horror, and stimulation to self-reflection and doubt. I admired her deeply and cheered the bravery of her work, though all I ever wrote about her was a few sentences in 1991.

HAUNTED HEART: A BIOGRAPHY OF SUSANNAH McCORKLE
By Linda Dahl

On one of those last nights at the Algonquin, I brought as my guest the singer Jane Monheit, who, at the age of twenty-two, was a rising sensation in jazz. I was working on a magazine piece about Monheit, and I wanted to see how the green young singer would respond to this veteran who embodied cloudy grays. (Monheit remarked, in the idiom of her generation, that McCorkle was "awesome.") When I filed the story, I included a note about McCorkle to my editor:

> McCorkle might be a great subject some day. Right now, she's in a weird lull. The room's half empty most nights. She's an acquired taste and hard to take sometimes. I think a lot of her own fans sort of take her for granted these days. But I think she's going to be one of those people who everybody rediscovers late in life.

I pictured McCorkle aging into a figure like Blossom Dearie, an odd bird revered after a long career as an endangered species.

About six months after that, McCorkle rendered moot my theory and all other theories about her future by leaping from the window of her sixteenth-floor apartment on Manhattan's Upper West Side. In the months to follow, the awful story of her death brought more attention to McCorkle than she had ever enjoyed in life. Encomia to McCorkle and her music appeared in *Time*, *Entertainment Weekly*, and *The New Yorker* (by the literary editor of this magazine, who was her friend); and the writer Linda Dahl, author of two books on women in jazz—*Morning Glory: A Biography of Mary Lou Williams* and *Stormy Weather: The Music and Lives of a Century of Jazzwomen*—began work on a biography. That book, called *Haunted Heart*, after the ballad by Arthur Schwartz and Howard Dietz that McCorkle recorded on her final album, has now been published by the University of Michigan Press. Subtitled "The Secret Life and Tragic Death of a Great American Songbird," it is an intimate and blunt book, full of details about McCorkle's spicy romances, along with material on the creative work that makes her worthy of attention five years after her death.

McCorkle, who would have turned sixty this year, was a child of the rock era who sang the music of another generation—the Tin Pan Alley hits and theater songs of the first half of the twentieth century. The status of this material as a canon, the "Great American Songbook," was not yet solidified when McCorkle

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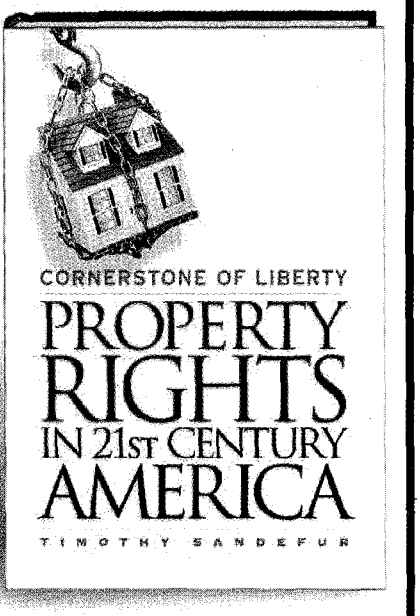
dissenting on the *Kelo* case



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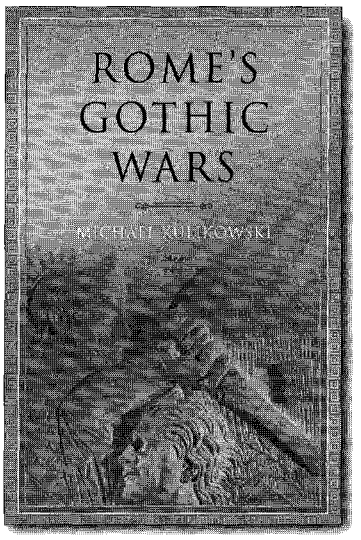

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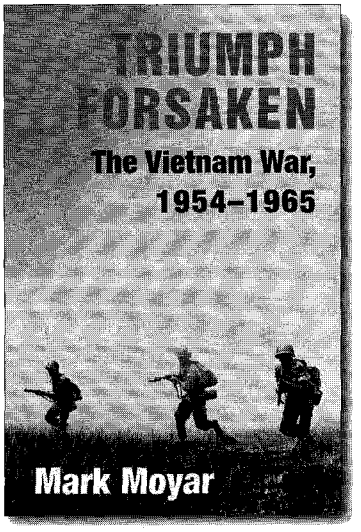

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–William Stueck, author of *Rethinking the Korean War*

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started singing, in the early 1970s. For some years, she made a specialty of tunes composed in the 1920s and 1930s, many of them sung originally by Billie Holiday, her first idol and vocal model, or by quasi-proto-feminists such as Mae West, Bessie Smith, Ethel Waters, and Mildred Bailey.

In Dahl's telling, McCorkle's choice of musical direction was a radical one that defied the hippie culture of the young singer's native Berkeley. But the history is more complicated. The Bay Area scene was infused with kitschy nostalgia for the 1920s and the early 1930s. While McCorkle was still in school, Janis Joplin was growling songs by Bessie Smith and Big Mama Thornton and releasing them on albums with cover art by Robert Crumb that captured the Haight-Ashbury aesthetic by appropriating the 1920s. Mama Cass made "Dream a Little Dream of Me" a hit in 1968. The Grateful Dead, a mutated jug band, would jam all night to old numbers like "Ain't Nobody's Business." For a Berkeley girl to turn to the early swing of the 1920s and 1930s was less a rejection of the music of her peers than a distillation of an element in its essence—a claim not to exceptionalism, but to purity.

When Paul McCartney manufactured his own vo-de-oh-do ditties for the Beatles, John Lennon mocked them as "granny music." He nailed both their ridiculousness and their power. What made songs such as "When I'm Sixty-Four" and "Honey Pie" palatable, even appealing, to baby boomers was the fact that they skipped over a full generation. Whether or not they were granny music, they were not mommy-and-daddy music. So it was with McCorkle's early repertoire: she would do an old Rodgers and Hart tune such as "Manhattan," from 1925, but not Rodgers and Hammerstein's "My Favorite Things," from her parents' record collection. She was not close to her mother or her father, and she would not trust a song under thirty, at least not until she had been performing for a few years and matured as an artist.

She began singing professionally at twenty-five, while living in Rome. A drifting expatriate, McCorkle had gone to Europe to write fiction and ended up falling under the sway of a group of continentals infatuated with vintage swing and the free, fun pre-war America that it evoked. She moved on to London, where other Americans such as the writer and cornet player Richard Sudhalter and the English pianist Keith Ingham were part of a cliquish swing revival. It was a parochial movement, rigid, zealous, almost a cult—and thus ideal for McCorkle at the time. She had attended fourteen schools before college, tugged around with her mother and two sisters as her father, who suffered from acute depression, bounced from job to job. Rootless and insecure, McCorkle no doubt found comfort in the impassioned surety of the swing revivalists.

As Dahl points out, McCorkle learned her craft by mimicking Billie Holiday. So did countless other singers inspired by Holiday; original voices frequently begin as imitations. My wife, who is a singer, admits to an early debt to Doris Day, who, she adds, started by imitating Ella Fitzgerald, who, she notes, began by emulating Connee Boswell. (No anxieties of influence here, just a lot of keen apprenticeships.) All of them found their own styles quickly, and so did McCorkle, who studied early jazz singers so assiduously that she probably knew who Boswell was copying. By the time I first saw McCorkle, just a few years after she had moved from London to build a career in Manhattan, the only traces of Holiday remained in the way she hung under a note—sometimes too far under—and let her vibrato crumble at the end of a phrase for dramatic effect. She developed a singular approach, working from both her strengths and her weaknesses.

A good (though not great) writer of prose fiction and nonfiction, McCorkle wrote short stories and worked on drafts of novels until her last days. One story written in her twenties, "Ramona by the Sea," was awarded an O. Henry Prize and anthologized after its initial publication in *Mademoiselle*. As a singer she remained a storyteller, attentive not only to the meanings of individual words, phrases, and lines of lyrics, but also to the narrative contours of the song. At this McCorkle had few equals other than Mabel Mercer, Frank Sinatra, and Sylvia Syms. Her skill at finding the shape of a song—or molding a flat song into a form of her devising—is especially striking in "The Waters of March," the chant-like tune by Antonio Carlos Jobim that she made one of her signatures. (A former linguistics student and onetime translator, McCorkle was fluent in Portuguese and understood the fragility of Jobim's

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songs.) Through the careful modulation of tone and the astute use of dynamics, she carries us with the spring waters from the death of winter to the new season's promise of rebirth. On her collection of Cole Porter tunes, *Easy to Love*, she even builds "Let's Do It," the listiest song on the composer's long list of list-songs, to a slyly referential climax.

McCorkle's most extraordinary gift as an artist was her command of the dark colors in the emotional spectrum. "I definitely became a singer in order to sing sad songs," Dahl quotes her as saying. She sought out music of heartbreak and loss, and she found it in varied quarters—in the blues of Bessie Smith and Mildred Bailey, naturally, and also in little-known theater songs from the teary scenes in forgotten shows, such as "This Funny World," a paean to futility from Rodgers and Hart's *Betsy*, a Broadway fizzle staged in 1926. McCorkle was uniquely adept at unearthing the melancholy parts of well-known songs—songs within the songs. Her masterpiece of internal excavation was surely her wrenching version of the hoary Irving Berlin anthem "There's No Business Like Show Business." She slowed the tempo nearly to a halt and clung to a few bittersweet phrases that most singers gloss over ("they smile when they are low," "brokenhearted, but you go on"), transforming a show-stopper into a piece that stops the heart. In the absence of sorrowful lyrics, McCorkle was content to upend whole songs through interpretation, as she did with Harold Arlen and Yip Harburg's tune for the Tin Man in *The Wizard of Oz*, "If I Only Had a Heart."

That is to say, she sought herself in the material. Ingham, her onetime mentor and second husband, groaned about this to Dahl. "By 1982 or so, every song had to relate to something totally in her own life somehow, everything had to be from a point of view that she agreed with or was about her, and she wouldn't sing many, many songs because she objected to them," he said, belittling McCorkle for being an artist rather than a professional. She was a tortured soul; Dahl reports that, in clinical terms, she suffered from bipolar II disorder. As an artist first and a psychiatric patient second, McCorkle gave voice to her torment in her music. After reading Dahl's book, I downloaded eight of McCorkle's CDs onto my iPod and listened to them closely for the first

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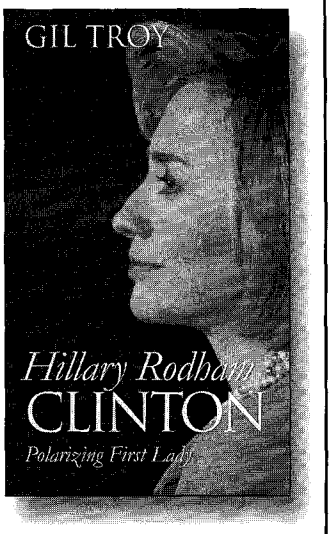

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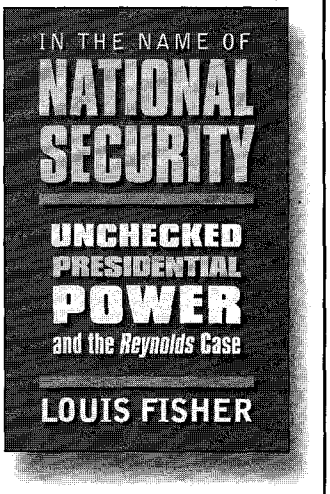

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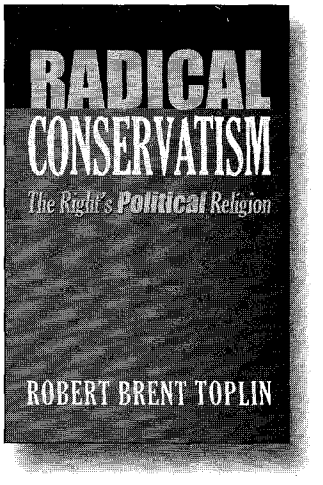

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time in several years. I found the music more beautiful and sadder than I recalled. It is precious work of profound melancholy and hopeful—sometimes desperate—yearning entwined with a stark fatalism.

As several musicians mentioned to Dahl, McCorkle was self-centered and ambitious. Hel-*lo*! She was in show business. Her self-absorption was more conspicuous and out of place in her prose writing. McCorkle published several essays on her musical influences and interests, such as Ethel Waters, Mae West, and Irving Berlin, in *American Heritage*, and they are all a bit too much about Susannah McCorkle. In the piece ostensibly about Berlin, the word "I" appears twenty-four times in the first twenty sentences. The fiction of hers that I have seen, much the same, seems limited by its author's experience and not fully imagined; it reads like journal entries.

Speaking of which, I know McCorkle was a copious correspondent and journal-keeper. She wrote to me half a dozen times, and I scarcely knew her. Her journals, along with a vast archive of other materials—comprising nearly all her unpublished writings, her music, her business and personal records, even the contents of the hard drive on her computer—are in repository at the New York Public Library, a donation of McCorkle's estate. According to the librarian in charge of the archive, Dahl had access to much, but not all, of this material. (Many of the electronic files were damaged and unreadable until the library had them recovered.) Dahl's book renders McCorkle artfully, but incompletely. As one still hungry for more information to help unravel the enigma that Susannah McCorkle remains, I look forward to a second biography of her, drawing more fully on the archival materials. An additional book on McCorkle might also help extricate her from her dubious status as the singer who committed suicide.

When McCorkle died, I was in London with my wife. We had divvied up the sections of the *International Herald Tribune* to read over breakfast, and I heard Karen gasp when she saw a sizable photograph of McCorkle in the paper. "Good for Susannah!" she said. As soon as she realized that the photo was an illustration not for a profile of McCorkle, but for her obituary, Karen started to quake. McCorkle's death was very bad for many people—her admirers, of course, and also for a great many more who never heard her music and came to know her only as the suicide girl. Today, most of McCorkle's CDs are out of print, and her longtime label, Concord, is doing little to preserve her legacy. There should be a second book about McCorkle, and then others, if only to keep us thinking about her and returning to the dark well of her music. ■

John Lewis Gaddis
The Gardener

DEAN ACHESON:
A LIFE IN THE COLD WAR
By Robert L. Beisner
(Oxford University Press, 768 pp., $35)

I.

"IT IS THE POLICY OF THE United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world." The speaker could have been Thomas Jefferson, Woodrow Wilson, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry S Truman, John F. Kennedy, Jimmy Carter, or Bill Clinton. In fact, it was George W. Bush, in his second inaugural address; and what he said is what historians will probably remember as the Bush Doctrine. This poses a serious challenge for Democrats. What do you do when Republicans steal your principles?

You can yell, "Stop, thief!"—but that's not likely to be very effective. You can deny that you ever held those principles—but then you have sold out what you stand for. You can acknowledge that you once held those principles, but that now that your opponent has endorsed them, you are compelled to abandon them—but that would be to surrender to partisanship, even to pettiness. You can question your opponent's sincerity, claiming that he doesn't really mean what he has said—but there is every reason to believe that he does. Or you can say, "Delighted you've come to see it our way."

Democrats so far have tried all of the above, except the last. This is shortsighted, because political parties in the United States have always appropriated each other's ideas. Jeffersonian Democrats started out as a states' rights party, but took over the Hamiltonian Federalists' view that there should be a strong central government to ensure national security. Lincoln Republicans re-affirmed the Jeffersonian commitment to liberty, while insisting that the Democrats' toleration of slavery was inconsistent with it. Progressive, New Deal, and Great Society Democrats embraced the Lincoln Republicans' principle of social justice, while noting that Republican policies for decades after the Civil War had fallen far short of it. Formerly isolationist Republicans converted to Roosevelt's internationalism during World War II, while arguing that they could make that strategy work more effectively. Clinton-era Democrats endorsed Republican calls for fiscal restraint and welfare reform, while claiming that they could implement these with greater compassion. So when Bush, in the aftermath of September 11, evoked the Jeffersonian idea of a world free from tyranny and the Wilsonian idea of a world safe for democracy, he was doing nothing radical or unprecedented: he was well within the tradition of American two-party politics.

IT'S STRANGE, THEN, THAT SO MANY Democrats today are outside this tradition. They have responded to the first Republican president to have become a liberal interventionist by quivering—and blogging—with rage. They have offered no plan for building on the Bush Doctrine and moving on. It's as if they're imitating the Republicans of the 1930s, who quivered with rage at Roosevelt (blogging had not been invented yet) while neglecting his warnings about tyrants, as well as his vision of what a world without them might be.

John Lewis Gaddis teaches history and grand strategy at Yale. He is the author, most recently, of THE COLD WAR: A NEW HISTORY *(Penguin).*

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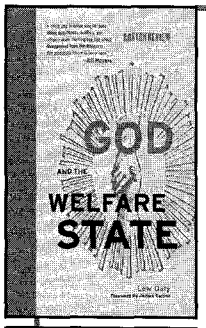
The fall of France and the attack on Pearl Harbor shocked the Republican Party into expanding its horizons. In the years that followed, leaders such as Wendell Willkie, Arthur H. Vandenberg, Thomas E. Dewey, and Dwight D. Eisenhower showed that Republicans could agree with Democratic presidents on the fundamental objectives of national security strategy, even as they criticized specific practices and proposed constructive alternatives. They appropriated Democratic principles, and thereby rescued their party from the extinction it might otherwise have brought upon itself. Five years after the shock of September 11, despite ample evidence that the Bush administration's practices have fallen short of its principles, today's Democrats have produced few such leaders; and as the fate of Joe Lieberman suggests, their party seems bent on expelling the ones they have.

There are younger Democrats, however, for whom September 11 has been what Pearl Harbor was to the Republican internationalists: a wake-up call for a party in need of a larger vision. Still mostly in their twenties and thirties, still predominantly students and staffers, they are not yet in a position to lead. But they are organizing for that day, and one of their goals is to regain credibility for Democrats on the biggest issue on which Republicans still retain public confidence: what it will take to keep this country safe. That will require, they understand, moving beyond claims that the chief danger confronting the nation resides not in the mountains of Pakistan or Afghanistan, or in the weapons laboratories of Iran and North Korea, or among suicidal Islamists devising increasingly innovative ways to blow themselves and us up, but rather in the Oval Office itself. The young Democrats' call to arms is Peter Beinart's recent book *The Good Fight*, with its reminder that it was the liberals of the late 1940s who devised the grand strategy that won the Cold War; and their agenda appears in the Progressive Policy Institute's recent report *With All Our Might*, which features a fierce, flag-waving Uncle Sam on the cover. Their organization bears the name of a hawkish Democratic hero: it is called the Truman National Security Project.

For a president who left office less popular than Bush is now, Truman's reputation has been remarkably buoyant. Historians long ago awarded him "near-great" status. Politicians from both parties have praised his tough, decisive, visionary leadership. This once-controversial president is now enshrined in consensus, so it's no accident that the Bush Doctrine sounds a lot like the Truman Doctrine, which made it the policy of the United States "to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures." Or that today's farsighted Democrats, in search of a usable past upon which to build their party's future, have made Truman their role model.

II.

DEAN ACHESON, TRUMAN'S fourth and longest-serving secretary of state, expressed his own respect for his former boss when he dedicated his memoir in 1969 to "the captain with the mighty heart." With characteristic deftness, however, Acheson preceded this tribute with



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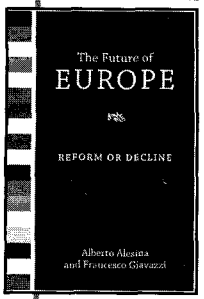

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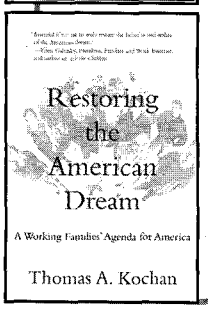

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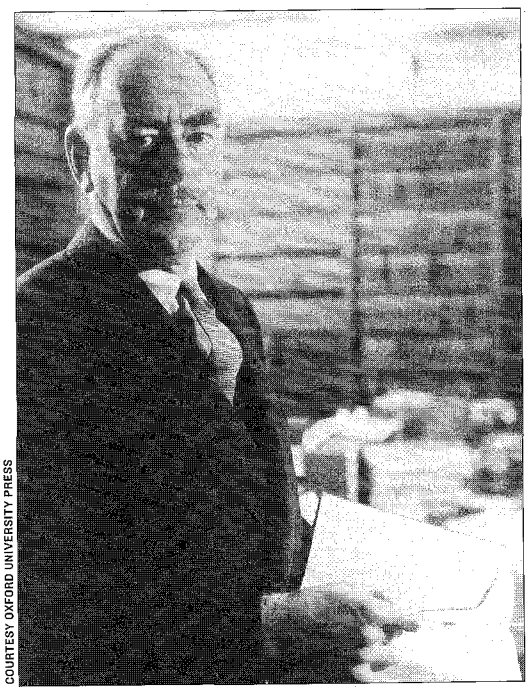
the now-famous quotation from Alphonso X of Spain that gave the book its title: "Had I been present at the creation I would have given some useful hints for the better ordering of the universe." It was a sly way for Acheson to remind his readers that he had indeed been present at the creation of the Truman grand strategy, and that he had not hesitated to provide recommendations for—even to insist upon—its "better ordering."

To be sure, as Truman said and as others have repeated a thousand times, the buck stopped with him. But Acheson's memoir tactfully intimates—and Robert L. Beisner's fine and long-awaited biography of Acheson now confirms—that the ideas did not start with Truman, and the strategy was not designed by Truman. In most instances, the president followed his advisers' advice. In this he differed from Roosevelt, Eisenhower, Nixon, and Reagan, all presidents who originated their own grand strategies and imposed them on their subordinates.

So who did shape strategy in the Truman administration? George F. Kennan has the best claim conceptually: it was he who showed that Stalin's Soviet Union required a hostile outside world to sustain its internal legitimacy, and who pointed the way toward "containing" that danger without the need for war or appeasement. Beisner makes the case, though, that it was Acheson who planted Kennan's thinking in Truman's mind, who won domestic support for it, and who persuaded allies of its logic and its feasibility. Kennan, he maintains, could never have accomplished these things; his intellectual brilliance was undeniable, but his political skills were minimal. Acheson, by contrast, was one of the most effective negotiators, facilitators, manipulators, and instigators ever to operate in Washington. It was he, Beisner argues, who largely secured for Truman the reputation he has now.

Beisner's is by no means the first biography of Acheson: Gaddis Smith, David McLellan, Douglas Brinkley, and James Chace have written well-regarded ones, and Acheson's own memoir sprawls over some seven hundred pages. But Beisner's biography is the first to focus closely on the Truman-Acheson relationship, and to evaluate in detail Acheson's performance as secretary of state. There is probably too much detail: Beisner's six hundred and fifty pages of text, which draw more extensively than any other book on the documentary record of the years between 1949 and 1953, suggest that he feared some posthumous but scathing rebuke from his subject if he left anything out. That is unfortunate, because the size of the book obscures its sharpness. It requires persistence, but it rewards it.

Born in 1893, Acheson was the son of a Connecticut bishop. He was educated at Groton, Yale, and Harvard Law School; he became a protégé of Holmes, Brandeis, and Frankfurter, and a partner in a distinguished Washington law firm. He was an immodest man with an acerbic tongue, a splendid wardrobe, and the most imposing mustache of the mid–twentieth century—this ornament was itself, James Reston observed, "a triumph of policy planning." Acheson's personality was "so glaring," Beisner writes, that "it is nearly impossible to imagine his being appointed to high office in our own times."



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Dean Acheson, circa 1950

It's surprising, therefore, that Acheson functioned as well as he did in the rough-and-tumble of post–World War II politics, and even more so that he bonded with an unprepared, accidental, insecure president. Truman was the last occupant of the White House to have attended no college at all. But Acheson understood, as Kennan did not, that if you want to lead, you have to adjust to the environment in which you find yourself. You cannot wait for it to adjust to you. And Acheson did this masterfully.

Some of his flexibility came from a lesson that Acheson learned early in his career: as Roosevelt's undersecretary of the treasury in 1933, he opposed a dubious presidential plan to inflate the price of gold, and FDR promptly fired him. Some of it reflected the influence of Holmes, who preferred experience over fixed principles as a guide to action. Some of it grew out of Acheson's enthusiasm for gardening: a skill that requires patience, sensitivity, and constant care, but that if practiced successfully holds out the reward of growth in desired directions. By the time Truman took office, Acheson had become a political horticulturalist.

The new president, full of energy but lacking direction, was badly in need of one. Roosevelt had left no instructions. His advisers clamored for Truman's attention, but could not agree on what to recommend. Truman, in turn, tried to appear decisive but had little beyond instinct to guide him. The result was disarray, nowhere more so than with respect to the Soviet Union. On bad days Truman could insist that Stalin respected only force and would violate any agreement made with him. On good days he could see in the Soviet dictator the spirit of his old mentor Tom Pendergast, the Kansas City political boss, a man you could trust because he would keep his word. The administration's actions reflected the president's uncertainty: if there was a consistent Soviet strategy during Truman's first year in office, it was flip-flopping.

Acheson himself, Beisner shows, was a belated cold warrior. As late as spring 1946, he still favored negotiations with the Soviet Union, so much so that J. Edgar Hoover thought him a security risk. What changed Acheson's mind—irrevocably—was not Kennan's "long telegram" or Churchill's "Iron Curtain" speech, but Stalin's demand for control of the Turkish Straits. Sensing that Truman was ready to draw the line, Acheson, now serving as undersecretary of state, made sure that it was a sharp one. The United States should risk war if necessary to defend Turkey, he insisted; otherwise the

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entire Near East and Middle East might fall within a Soviet sphere of influence. Truman bought the argument, Stalin backed down, and Acheson's influence at the White House rose accordingly.

He then cemented it by meeting a train. The November elections produced a Republican Congress for the first time since the Hoover administration. Truman returned to Washington in disgrace, to find only Acheson waiting when his train pulled into Union Station. Being there was an act of kindness, but Beisner suggests that it was perhaps also a matter of calculation. Whatever Acheson's motives, his action left Washington full of people who would later kick themselves for not meeting that train that day. And it forged a friendship unlike any that Truman would have with his other advisers—one that would last for the rest of the two men's lives.

Truman had no shortage of capable subordinates: Kennan, Marshall, Forrestal, Harriman, Lovett, McCloy, Clifford, and Nitze were hardly lightweights. But none nurtured Truman as carefully as Acheson did. That task required delicacy, because the president bristled when patronized and guarded his prerogatives jealously. Like a British monarch, he expected to be consulted even when—as was usually the case—he had no ideas of his own to offer. Beisner demonstrates Acheson's mastery of this art, as well as his ability to recover when Truman strayed into unpredictability or startled the nation—at times also friendly foreign governments—with his flinty candor. Having learned his lesson with FDR, Acheson was not going to go at odds with his successor. But still there were opportunities for creative gardening.

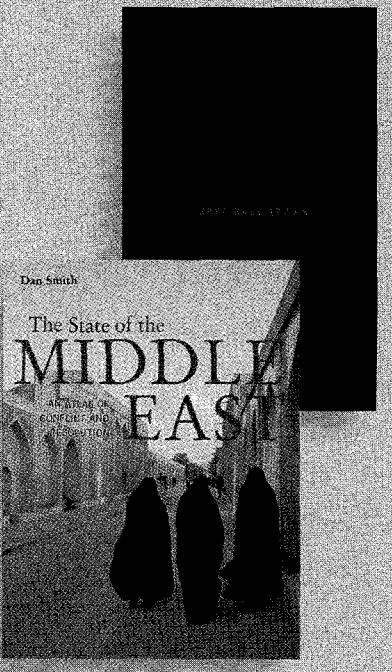
III.

ACHESON DEFINED THOSE OPportunities broadly. The task facing the Truman administration, he recalled in his memoir, had been "just a bit less formidable than that described in . . . Genesis." God's task was "to create a world out of chaos; ours [was] to create half a world, a free half, out of the same material without blowing the whole to pieces in the process." That meant convincing a country still largely isolationist in its instincts that it should take on permanent international responsibilities.

One way of doing this was to dramatize: Acheson learned that he could win arguments by swooping alarmingly through space and time. As his warning about Turkey in 1946 suggests, it was he, not Eisenhower, who invented the domino theory—if that country went, so would everything else in the region. And although it may have been a stretch to claim that the Soviet-American confrontation had no parallel since the days of Athens and Sparta, or Rome and Carthage, the analogies resonated with the president, who was an ancient-history buff—and they caused jaws to drop and eyes to bulge among skeptical journalists and parsimonious legislators. It was Acheson who inspired the Truman Doctrine: the president's speech to Congress in March 1947 had the specific purpose of securing $400 million in military and economic aid to Greece and Turkey, but Acheson persuaded him to link the fate of "free peoples" everywhere to the outcome of the vote.

Exaggeration was not Acheson's only method of advocacy. He could speak quietly and reason closely, as when he assured congressmen that the Truman Doctrine did not promise protection

The Middle East



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everywhere and all at once against "armed minorities" and "outside pressures": interests and capabilities would determine how, where, and when the United States acted. A tireless spokesman for the Marshall Plan, Acheson carefully tailored his arguments to his audiences. Beisner describes him pulling off his jacket on a hot day, rolling up his sleeves, and improvising an explanation for Mississippi farmers of how they could do well for themselves (cotton exports) by helping Europe (through economic recovery) to hold back a potential aggressor (the Soviet Union) that might be as dangerous as the ones just vanquished (Germany and Japan).

The ease with which Acheson combined such justifications, qualifications, and simplifications made Kennan and other advisers nervous, but it was just what the president needed to focus his own thinking, and convey it within the government, and convince the country of its merits. Truman's first year of cohabitation with a Republican Congress turned out to be the most fruitful of the entire Cold War in building a bipartisan foreign policy. It was largely Acheson, the political horticulturalist, who made it so.

IV.

ACHESON LEFT THE STATE DEPARTMENT in the summer of 1947 to recoup his finances, but the triumphantly re-elected Truman called him back in 1949 to become secretary of state—no doubt with the expectation that he would continue to be as effective. In some ways he was. He played a major role in persuading the European victims of Nazi Germany that it was better to rehabilitate and re-arm West Germany than to punish it. He was equally instrumental in convincing Americans of the need to protect, through NATO, what was left of Europe. He was relentlessly multilateral, deferring repeatedly to the wishes of allies while keeping the overall shape of NATO within range of what the United States wanted. Beisner tells of one late-night drafting session in which, after the exhausted British and French foreign ministers had gone to bed, Acheson took it upon himself to represent their positions as well as his own; they awoke the next morning satisfied with the results.

The new secretary of state supported Truman's decision to build the hydrogen bomb, but worked hard to make sure that the United States would never need to use it. He brought military spending into line with foreign policy commitments, overcoming Truman's concerns about the budgetary implications as well as objections from Louis Johnson, arguably the worst secretary of defense ever. Although Acheson failed to anticipate China's intervention in the Korean War, he led the effort to keep the conflict limited and, in eight epic days of congressional testimony, skillfully deflated the war's inflated hero, General Douglas MacArthur, who was sacked by Truman in the spring of 1951. The following year, Acheson even talked the president out of authorizing a CIA coup, later famously re-authorized by Eisenhower, to overthrow the government of Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán in Guatemala.

But for someone who greased wheels efficiently while in a subordinate position at the State Department, Acheson generated more than his share of friction when he actually got to run the place. Part of the problem, Beisner points out, was that he could not resist showing off.

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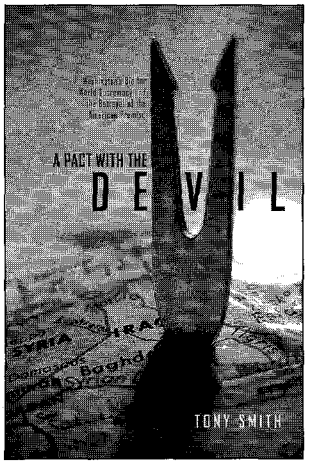

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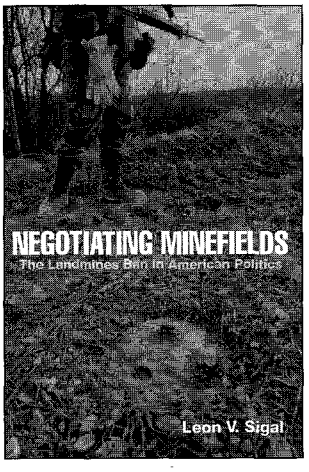

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The results could be entertaining, as when a Polish journalist at a press conference complained of being mistaken for a representative of the Soviet news agency Tass. "I stand corrected," Acheson shot back. "Demi-Tass." But Acheson's barbs were too quick, too sharp, and too frequent; they left their targets nursing their wounds, Beisner tells us, "like paper cuts." Over time the resentments built up, and friends the administration needed began to drop away.

More serious difficulties arose when Acheson allowed loyalty to a friend—not even a close one—to override common sense. Only months after taking office, he announced publicly that "I do not intend to turn my back upon Alger Hiss"—despite having seen convincing evidence of Hiss's espionage. Nothing in Acheson's job description required him to say anything at all about this case. By appearing to defend Hiss, he wounded himself and gave ammunition to the administration's most vociferous critics, not least among them Senator Joseph McCarthy and his followers. Truman rejected Acheson's offer to resign, but the president was left with a vulnerable secretary of state when he needed an impregnable one. And it was Acheson's own fault.

Another virtue that became a flaw was Acheson's belief in transparency. Once it became clear in the summer of 1949 that Chiang Kai-shek's government in China was about to collapse, the secretary of state tried to explain why by releasing more than one thousand pages of still-sensitive documents. Acheson hoped thereby to placate the State Department's critics while opening the way for diplomatic relations with the new government of Mao Zedong. It was a remarkably misguided decision, for the "White Paper" instead fueled the fury of the China Lobby, led to allegations that Acheson and his subordinates had sought to sabotage Chiang, and shut down approaches to Mao—who, as Chinese documents have shown, wasn't interested anyway.

Fortunately for Acheson, the even graver consequences of a similar gaffe did not become fully apparent until after his death. Speaking without a prepared text, he revealed in a speech at the National Press Club in January 1950 what the National Security Council had just decided secretly: that America's "defensive perimeter" did not include South Korea. It is now clear that Stalin and Mao read Acheson's speech and may well have concluded from it that they could safely approve Kim Il-Sung's request for permission to attack across the 38th parallel later that year. Beisner is careful not to claim that Acheson started the Korean War. Still, in his effort to be open with the American people, Acheson failed to consider who else might be listening.

Acheson gave every appearance of thriving on criticism, even when he had brought it upon himself. "Being vilified," he once commented, has "its stimulating aspects, and . . . may even be good for the liver." But it can hardly have been good for the Truman administration. Never a shrinking violet, Acheson turned himself as secretary of state into an exotic plant: he became Truman's most controversial second-term appointment. He had worked out a strategy for containing the Russians, but he never quite devised one for containing himself.

V.

How does it alter the Truman foreign policy legacy if it was Acheson, for better or worse, who chiefly shaped it? Beisner suggests an answer when he points out that, however hawkish he may have been, Acheson was not a "realist." He rejected the proposition, basic to realism as it is traditionally understood, that the internal makeup of states can be separated from their external behavior. It was not enough just to balance power in the postwar world: "it had become imperative," as Beisner summarizes Acheson's thinking, "to defend a civilization built on liberty against one founded in tyranny, and how societies organized themselves was at the root of the matter."

This put Acheson at odds with Kennan, who was never an enthusiast for reforming other societies. It also meant—to Kennan's frustration—that negotiations with regimes in need of reform could never be serious. Acheson frequently advocated negotiations, but only from "strength"—which for him was a receding horizon. The United States would have enough of it when the Soviet Union had none. NSC-68, the strategy review that Acheson orchestrated and Paul Nitze conducted early in 1950, stated explicitly that any settlement with the Soviet Union could only record "the progress which the free world will have made in creating a political and economic system

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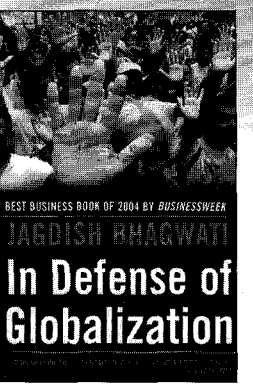

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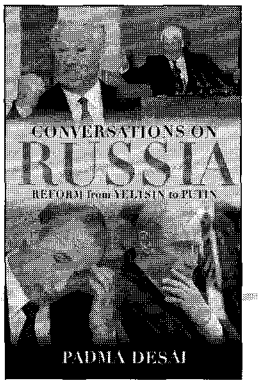

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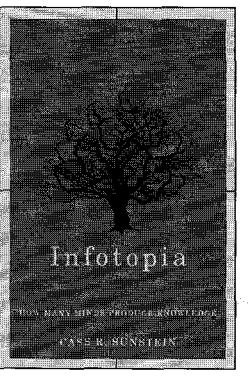

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in the world so successful that the frustration of the Kremlin's design for world domination will be complete." Or, as Acheson himself put it in a public speech that spring, "We are children of freedom. We cannot be safe except in an environment of freedom.... We believe that all people in the world are entitled to as much freedom, to develop in their own way, as we want for ourselves."

The problem with Acheson's strategy was its vagueness. He could not say—because he did not know, and Beisner thinks he did not care—how long it would take, how much it would cost, and what compromises might corrupt it along the way. He could set the course, fuel the vessel, train the crew, and cultivate the captain, but he could not, Beisner acknowledges, envisage "the far shore.... To the end of his days, he was writing 'build strength' on his prescription pad." It was all very Holmesian: prefer acting to brooding; learn from experience; distrust perfectionism; tolerate contradictions; don't look back; enjoy the trip even if you can't see where you are going; never let the bastards grind you down.

Beisner thinks that this anticipates Reagan: "like Acheson, the president who presided over the beginning of the end of the cold war believed in winning that contest." There is something in that: it is interesting that Nitze worked for both men. But Reagan really did believe in negotiation. Once strength had been built to his satisfaction, he was ready to talk to the Kremlin, even before there was anyone to talk to. And as his conversations with Gorbachev later revealed, Reagan was also a nuclear abolitionist. Acheson emphatically was not; he thought Kennan a fool for even suggesting such a thing. In retirement, Acheson advised threatening the use of nuclear weapons with such vehemence that he frightened John F. Kennedy, who stopped listening to him.

What Beisner does not say is how much Acheson anticipates George W. Bush. The president's national strategy statements seem modeled on NSC-68. His performance is under attack, but so was Truman's in his sixth year. Bush is stuck with a bloody insurgency in Iraq, but Truman and Acheson blundered into a bloody war with China. And Bush's rhetoric channels Acheson with eerie precision. "The survival of liberty in our land increasingly depends on the success of liberty in other lands," the president argued in his second inaugural address. "The best hope for peace in our world is the expansion of freedom in all the world."

So where does this leave young Democrats who are looking to Truman to guide their party's future? They could begin by reading Beisner on Acheson, a book that demythologizes Truman. It is important to have heroes, but it is also important to get them right; and Beisner does that. Young Democrats could also rethink their party's prejudice against plagiarism. This is indeed a bad idea when practiced by students, novelists, historians, journalists, and over-committed commencement speakers. But it can be a very good idea when practiced by political parties.

More than anything else, the borrowing of ideas—often without attribution—is what has spared the United States the proliferation of single-issue parties that so often paralyzes politics elsewhere. Political plagiarism makes big tents possible. If Reagan and Bush could borrow from Truman and Acheson, then it's hard to see why Democrats today should not borrow from Reagan and Bush. To say that nothing can be learned from an opponent's ideas is to claim infallibility for one's own, a pretension to which even Acheson never aspired.

The Bush administration, like the Truman administration, has given its supporters much to apologize for and its critics much to denounce. It is from those gifts, which reflect the recalcitrance of reality when strategy tries to shift it, that the Democrats will again rise as the Republicans once did. The only question is how long it will take Democrats to remember how to do this. ■

Cass R. Sunstein

It Could Be Worse

OUR UNDEMOCRATIC CONSTITUTION: WHERE THE CONSTITUTION GOES WRONG (AND HOW WE THE PEOPLE CAN CORRECT IT)
By Sanford Levinson
(Oxford University Press, 233 pp., $28)

I.

THOUGH THE UNITED STATES is a young country, Americans are prone to ancestor worship. We learn not merely to admire the Founding Fathers but also to revere the Founding Fathers, who are sometimes described as if they had been touched directly by God. We question our governors, including our judges, but we rarely question our founding document. We feel free to ridicule or to despise the decisions of the Supreme Court, but not those of the Founders (putting slavery to one side).

Toward the end of his life, Thomas Jefferson expressed some exasperation about this state of affairs. He complained of those who "look at constitutions with sanctimonious reverence, and deem them like the arc of the covenant, too sacred to be touched." He noticed with evident alarm that people were ascribing "to the men of the preceding age a wisdom more than human," and seeing "what they did to be beyond amendment." He proclaimed that the founding generation "was very like the present, but without the experience of the present." Insisting that the Constitution should be rethought every generation, Jefferson offered a plea to posterity: "Let us not weakly believe that one generation is not as capable as another of taking care of itself.... The dead have no rights."

James Madison had a fundamentally different view. Fearing the effects of popular passions, and insisting that the Constitution had been adopted under unusually favorable historical circumstances, Madison wanted the founding document to be a kind of fixed star, immunized from the vicissitudes of history and the pressures of endless public scrutiny. In his words, "frequent appeals to the public" would remove "that veneration which time bestows on every thing, and without which perhaps the wisest and freest governments would not possess the requisite stability." To be sure, Madison accepted the amendment process set out in Article V of the Constitution, which allows the Constitution to be changed after the approval of three-

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fourths of the states. But constitutional amendments are extremely difficult to produce; they are deliberately reserved, in Madison's own words, for "great and extraordinary occasions."

Over the course of American history, Madison's view has prevailed and Jefferson's has mostly dropped out of sight. Two years after the ratification of the Constitution, the document was in a sense completed through the addition of the ten amendments that constitute the Bill of Rights. Since then, the Constitution has been amended just seventeen times. The most important changes followed the Civil War, when the abolition of slavery was accompanied by a new set of rights and a significant transfer of authority from the states to the national government. During Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal, the nation's understanding of both rights and institutions was again altered—but without the slightest change in the founding document. For more than two centuries, then, the basic design of the Constitution has proved remarkably resilient to any kind of major rethinking.

Sanford Levinson takes Jefferson's side against Madison. More particularly, Levinson believes that the Constitution is fundamentally undemocratic, and that a new constitutional convention is necessary to bring forward a better charter. Unlike most of those who have explored the question of constitutional change, Levinson focuses exclusively on the document's structural provisions, and does not investigate its provisions governing individual rights. Nor does he want constitutional change to occur through the existing provisions for amendment—provisions that are, in his view, hopelessly undemocratic and hence part of the problem, not the solution. In calling for a constitutional convention, Levinson wants the nation to reconsider the document not piecemeal, but as a whole. He offers multiple objections to the Framers' design of the three branches of government; he hopes that the sheer accumulation of objections will make the case for large-scale reconsideration.

Levinson's first complaint involves the legislature, and above all the composition of the Senate. Under the Constitution, every state, regardless of population, receives two senators for a period of six years. This is a conspicuous violation of the rule of "one person, one vote." Wyoming, with about 500,000 people, has the same number of senators as California, with about 35 million people. Nearly one-quarter of the Senate comes from states whose total population is merely 14 million—less than 5 percent of the nation. As of now, there are 55 Republican senators, 44 Democratic senators, and one independent (Vermont's Jim Jeffords). Stunningly, the Democratic minority actually represents more voters. In 2004, Barbara Boxer received more than six million votes in California, allowing her to retain her seat, and John Thune received less than 198,000 votes in South Dakota, allowing him to defeat Tom Daschle. And remarkably, the equal representation of the states in the Senate is the *only* provision of the Constitution that is made effectively unamendable by the document itself. (States can be deprived of equal representation in the Senate only with their consent.)

Does this matter? After all, the Constitution essentially preserves the idea of "one person, one vote" in the House of Representatives, where states receive representatives in accordance with their

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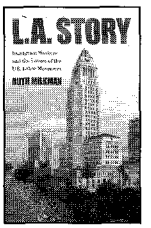

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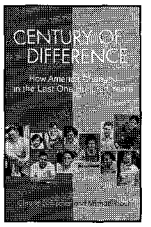

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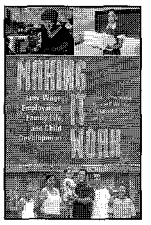

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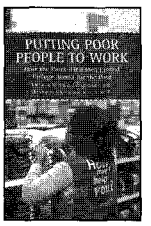

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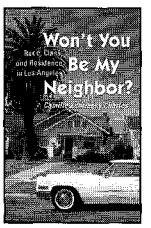

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populations. But Levinson notes that under the bicameral system, the Senate is able to stop legislation. A large national majority determined to enact legislation might therefore be blocked by a small minority in the Senate. More concretely, Levinson claims that the composition of the Senate helps to explain the fact that the national government often, and perversely, redistributes resources from high-population states to low-population states. Consider the fact that in terms of per capita funding for homeland security, the citizens of Wyoming receive no less than seven times the amount received by the citizens of New York. (Do the citizens of Wyoming actually have more to fear from terrorists?) The composition of the Senate also ensures that racial minorities end up with a disproportionately weak voice, since small states tend to have unusually small nonwhite populations. All this, in Levinson's view, counts as an indefensible departure from democratic ideals.

More generally, Levinson objects to the whole system of bicameralism on the ground that it gives rise to so many "veto points," allowing the democratic will to be thwarted. By its very nature, bicameralism makes it harder to enact legislation, simply because it allows measures to be defeated whenever one house is unwilling to approve of them. And even if we endorse bicameralism, must we accept the president's veto power, which has now become a crucial part of the law-making process? Levinson notes that at the founding, and for decades thereafter, the president exercised the veto power rarely, and only on the ground that he believed the relevant legislation to be unconstitutional. In the modern period, the president feels free to veto legislation simply because he dislikes it as a matter of policy. The United States has now had more than 2,500 presidential vetoes. Even that number understates the importance of the veto power, because its mere existence affects the legislation that actually is enacted.

The Constitution's provisions governing the legislature have another problem: they do not make adequate provision for emergency situations. What happens if a terrorist attack kills many members of the House of Representatives? The answer is that under the Constitution, their seats must be filled by a new election. But it takes a lot of time to do that. Levinson fears that without a constitutional contingency plan, the result is likely to be "centralization of basically dictatorial power in the president, if we are lucky."

Levinson believes that Article II, governing the executive branch, is also seriously defective. The initial difficulty is the electoral college, which makes it possible for the president to be selected without being the choice of a popular majority. It is widely known that in 2000 Al Gore received more votes than George W. Bush. But no fewer than nineteen presidents—nearly half!—have captured strong majorities in the electoral college despite failing to obtain majorities of the popular vote. In 1992, Bill Clinton was the choice of only 43 percent of voters; Richard Nixon did no better in 1968; Abraham Lincoln won nearly 60 percent of the electoral college in 1860 despite winning only 39.8 percent of the popular vote. Levinson argues that a direct popular election of the president would be much more sensible.

In so arguing, Levinson goes beyond an emphasis on historical anomalies. He contends that because of the winner-take-all system within the states, presidential candidates have a strong incentive to ignore most of the nation. In 2004, 99 percent of advertising expenditures were focused on only seventeen states; Ohio and Florida accounted for no less than 45 percent of total expenditures. Levinson thinks that the exclusive focus on "battlegrounds" greatly distorts public debate. Most of the nation's cities are not in those states, and hence presidential elections do not focus on the problems faced by the many millions of people in those cities. In late October 2000, anyone "living in the United States ... would have believed that the most crucial issue facing the entire country was prescription drugs for the elderly." Levinson adds that the composition of the electoral college gives unfair advantages to states with small populations. In 2000, Gore won New Mexico and its five electoral votes, while Bush won Wyoming, Alaska, and North Dakota for a combined nine electoral votes; but New Mexico has a larger population than those three states combined.

Levinson has other objections to Article II. For one thing, the president is elected on the first Tuesday in November; but the president-elect does not assume office until January 20. Hence, a repudiated president will exercise the authority of office for ten weeks after his repudiation. More fundamentally, Levinson thinks that Article II makes it much too hard for the public to remove a sitting president from office. True, impeachment is possible for "high crimes and misdemeanors." But what if the president is incompetent, an evident disaster, or simply doing what most people believe to be a bad job? Why shouldn't the public be able to get rid of him? Among the world's constitutions, the U.S. Constitution is quite unusual in so strongly insulating the chief executive from removal while in office.

The difficulty of removing the president is especially troublesome in view of what Levinson sees as the Constitution's grant of excessive power to the presidency. Many chief executives, including Clinton, have acted as if they were not much constrained by Congress's power to declare war; they have felt free to use military force without any kind of declaration from Congress. Other presidents, including George W. Bush, have interpreted ambiguities in the document to allow the chief executive expansive power to protect the nation as he sees fit—as, for example, through detaining suspected terrorists and wiretapping by the National Security Agency. Levinson believes that the public should take a sustained look at the president's constitutional authority and impose greater restrictions on that authority.

Nor does Levinson spare the Supreme Court, objecting to the Constitution's grant of lifetime appointments. Human abilities often diminish over time, and the oldest justices, whose opinions were formed in the distant past, may be ill-equipped to understand current problems. Levinson argues that the United States should follow the practice of most nations and appoint members of the highest court for a fixed term—a step that might also reduce the political acrimony that now accompanies Supreme Court appointments.

Levinson is aware that the amendment process seems to provide a democratic route for curing any democratic defects in the constitutional order, but in his view that process is plainly inadequate. Indeed, Levinson contends that Article V creates "what may be the most important bars of our constitutional iron cage precisely because it works to make practically impossible needed changes in our polity." Under the founding document, the Constitution can be changed in two ways. First, two-thirds of both houses of Con-

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gress may propose amendments, which become effective when ratified by three-quarters of the states. Second, the legislatures of two-thirds of the states can call a convention for proposing amendments, which also become effective when ratified by three-quarters of the states. Both processes are cumbersome and complex, ensuring that constitutional change may be more difficult under the U.S. Constitution than under any other constitution on the face of the earth. Often the need for approval from three-quarters of the states is a decisive obstacle. Three-quarters of the states, for example, have not been willing to approve reform of the electoral college.

Building on Jefferson's plea, Levinson believes that the Constitution's defects should be cured by means of nothing less than a new constitutional convention. In such a convention, the nation "would feel itself legitimately empowered, and psychologically free, to do what the framers of 1787 did, which was to look at all existing constitutions as well as the lessons derived from their own experiences." He would like the process to start with a nationwide petition campaign directed at Congress. He hopes that such a campaign might culminate in a healthy and reflective process, in which many millions of citizens engage in critical thought about their own institutions.

II.

Most arguments for constitutional change come from crackpots who badly misunderstand the Constitution. Levinson is emphatically not to be counted in that company. His critical discussion of the founding document is bold, bracingly unromantic, and filled with illuminating insights. He accomplishes an unlikely feat, which is to make a really serious argument for a new constitutional convention, one that is founded squarely on democratic ideals. Jefferson himself believed not only that old documents are likely to prove defective over time, but also that societies benefit from "a general attention to the public affairs." Levinson's call for a constitutional convention might be supplemented with the claim that it could promote a kind of civic education that might supply both immediate and long-term benefits to American democracy.

But in the end I am very far from persuaded. In some cases, the Framers probably had it right. In other cases, a constitutional amendment would probably be a good idea, but the problem is hardly serious enough to justify the turmoil of a constitutional convention. Might we try to imagine what such an event would actually be like, in the glare of the media and the blogosphere? Would true deliberation, and an excellent constitutional product, be likely? True, the composition of the Senate and the electoral college are major flaws—but there is a serious risk that a convention would produce a much inferior document, and that risk is best avoided. On this count, as on so many others, Madison, not Jefferson, is the proper guide.

Let us begin with those parts of the Constitution that are not especially hard to defend against Levinson's complaints. Is it really anti-democratic to allow the president to veto legislation, subject to a two-thirds override? After all, the president is himself elected, and whatever the problems with the electoral college, he is

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the most visible and in a sense the most accountable person in American government. The most veto-happy American president—contributing well over one-fifth of the total—was Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who was also one of the most popular presidents. True, the president's veto power increases the need for consensus before legislation may be passed, but it is hardly clear that this is a bad thing. We need to know whether this additional veto point does damage on balance. Levinson does not show that the veto power of the president, with his national constituency, decreases the democratic nature of American government or weakens the legislation that ultimately emerges.

Or consider the difficulty of removing a sitting president—a difficulty deliberately created by the Framers, who explicitly decided to forbid impeachment merely for "maladministration." The Framers sought to preserve the system of checks and balances by giving the president a degree of protection against legislative reprisal; and it is hardly clear that they were wrong. The president's relative independence decreases the risk that the nation will be destabilized, or that its political life will be distorted, by partisan efforts to remove its chief executive. The disgraceful (and unconstitutional) impeachment of Clinton provides a nice lesson about the risks of Levinson's proposal.

Nor is it at all clear that the Constitution would be better if "We the People" could amend it more easily. As Levinson is aware, the document provides a broad and general framework that allows American government to change over time, usually in response to democratic wishes. (In this way, Jefferson's desire for generational rethinking and refinement has not been entirely thwarted.) The twentieth century witnessed the rise of the administrative state, a massive strengthening of the national government, and significant changes in our understandings of constitutional rights. Some people deplore these changes. Yet it remains true that the Constitution does not freeze the nation; formal amendments are not necessary to alter key aspects of our government.

The Constitution certainly fixes certain features of our basic institutions, including those that Levinson deplores; but if formal amendments were made easier, we might find that the country would be rapidly engaged in a series of highly polarized and probably unproductive debates over such issues as flag-burning, same-sex marriage, the display of the Ten Commandments on public property, the future of affirmative action, and the use of the words "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance. The history of proposed amendments in recent decades—often focused on unpopular decisions of the Supreme Court—strongly supports Madison's warning about the potentially harmful effects of public passions.

SOME OF LEVINSON'S POINTS DO make a persuasive argument for constitutional reform through the existing channels. To allow a period of preparation, there needs to be some gap between the election and the inauguration of a new president; but the current period may well be too long. The document should probably be amended to spell out procedures in case of a successful attack on members of Congress. With respect to the question of life tenure for Supreme Court justices, most nations operate on the assumption that the benefits of a fixed term are greater than the costs; they are probably right. But surely points of this kind cannot justify the radical step of convening a new constitutional convention.

Levinson does have two exceedingly strong complaints. The electoral college is clearly an anachronism, and as a matter of principle a democracy should elect its president by a popular vote. To be sure, it is not right to say that the electoral college favors small states; if a candidate wins a large state by one vote, he gets a much bigger leg up on winning the presidency than if he wins a small state by one vote, and in this way the current system actually favors large states. But as Levinson points out, it is especially unfortunate that millions of voters, even undecided voters, are ignored because they live in states whose majority will inevitably support one or another side.

A possible answer is that without the electoral college, presidential candidates would have an incentive to ignore the least populous states and to concentrate their efforts on New York, California, Illinois, Texas, and other highly populated places. And it is true that the electoral college requires the president to have a degree of trans-regional appeal, which may reduce political polarization. But presidents represent people, not geographical areas. If candidates focus their efforts on the most populated areas, is something really amiss? In any case, it is not at all clear that political polarization would be more serious if the president were elected directly. Whatever the best solution, it is very difficult to defend the electoral college in its present form.

Levinson's argument against the current composition of the Senate, the product of an old political compromise, is stronger still. Levinson is right to complain about a situation in which small numbers of people, concentrated in certain areas, have disproportionate political power. He is also right to object that the consequence of the Senate's composition is to ensure perverse forms of redistribution, typically to people in less populous states. It is ironic but true—and a definite point in Levinson's favor—that the provision of the Constitution that most deserves amendment is the only part of the document that it explicitly declares to be off-limits (unless the state consents to losing its equal representation, which is not likely).

UNFORTUNATELY, LEVINSON says very little about the risks of a new constitutional convention. Suppose that the entire Constitution were placed up for grabs. Would the new product be better than the current one? That would be most unlikely. More importantly, the document is not only the words that its Framers wrote. Its current meaning is a product not merely of the founding generations but of unfolding practices and interpretations, produced by countless people and developing over long periods of time. Some of those interpretations come from the federal judiciary, which is not a democratically elected body; but most of constitutional evolution, in the form of new understandings of the document's general phrases and frequent silences, has been produced politically, not judicially.

Here is the most important point. As we currently live it, the American Constitution is a creation not merely of Madison and Hamilton and their contemporaries, but also of Abraham Lincoln, Woodrow Wilson, Susan B. Anthony, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Martin Luther King Jr., Ronald Reagan, and countless others (including anonymous voters at many stages in the nation's history). In a partial vindication of Jefferson's arguments, each generation has, in

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fact, contributed a great deal to constitutional understandings. If the existing constitutional framework is to a significant degree a democratic product, the democratic argument for changing it is weakened. And if the existing framework is a product of many minds operating over time, there is all the more reason to fear that any particular set of people, operating at any particular time and inevitably in the grip of current concerns, will make it worse rather than better.

There is another problem. If the United States had a constitutional convention, would it really focus on the composition of the Senate, the electoral college, the presidential veto, and the other issues that concern Levinson? Or would it instead rethink symbolic questions and constitutional rights—for example, by reducing the protections given to criminal defendants, restricting freedom of speech, increasing protection of property rights, weakening the separation of church and state, and entrenching some controversial views about foreign policy or the economy? It seems at least as likely that some such measures, rather than Levinson's structural proposals, would be the major results of a contemporary convention.

In calling for a constitutional convention, Levinson underplays the crucial fact that the Constitution was meant to create a republic, not a democracy. The original constraints on majority rule were deliberate; they were designed at once to promote deliberation and to protect liberty. In the words of Hamilton, the "jarring of parties" in the legislature was meant to "promote deliberation." Some of what Levinson deplores, as frustration of the majority's will, is best understood as an effort to promote a system of deliberative democracy. As Washington famously explained to Jefferson, the Senate was meant "to cool" legislation by providing a kind of deliberative check. The various veto points that Levinson dislikes can be understood as an effort to protect liberty as well as deliberation, by ensuring against the use of national power unless a broad consensus can be obtained on its behalf.

It is true that the Senate and the electoral college, as presently constituted, are not easily defended as ways of promoting deliberation or protecting liberty. But the argument for a new convention cannot be clinched by reference to those admittedly serious imperfections. Sanford Levinson has valuably shown that parts of America's founding document are seriously flawed, and he has demonstrated that both representatives and citizens should treat the document not with "sanctimonious reverence" but as the revisable product of fallible human beings. But nobody should be packing their bags for Philadelphia. ■

David A. Bell

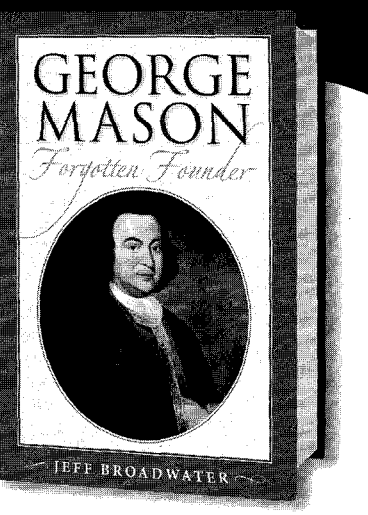
The Gift

MARCEL MAUSS: A BIOGRAPHY
By Marcel Fournier
Translated by Jane Marie Todd
(Princeton University Press, 442 pp., $35)

THE OUTWARD LIVES OF great intellectuals do not always make lively reading, even for other intellectuals. For every tragic, monstrous, or heroic thinker whose biography resembles pulp fiction, there is another who passed his days quietly at his desk, reading and writing, returning home every evening to a cocoon of bourgeois respectability. For every Shelley, a Kant; for every Foucault, a Weber. A great mind does not need to experience the abyss to find originality. Sometimes he or she can, as Hamlet said, "be bounded in a nut shell and count [himself] a king of infinite space." The interest of such outwardly conventional figures lies in what they thought, not in what they did; and perhaps also in what their lives tell us about the world through which they passed.

Marcel Mauss, the nephew of Émile Durkheim and a great social scientist in his own right, falls unmistakably into this category. With his new biography, Marcel Fournier has performed a significant service by collecting the most important information about Mauss's career and

In a New Light



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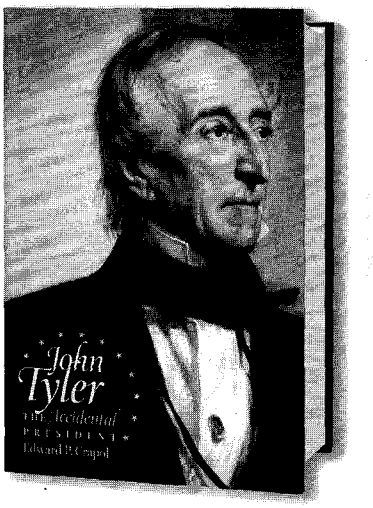

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presenting it in a lucid 350 pages (not including notes), but the material does not exactly thrill. Mauss's outward life was the stuff of notecards and well-worn library seats, of Sunday family dinners and academic politics, of common aches and pains and the occasional discreet fling about which few details survive. Mauss studied philosophy, taught social science, wrote books, and—unlike other founding figures of modern anthropology—did not venture off to Africa or the American Northwest or Samoa to observe "primitive cultures" where they lived. He mostly stayed put in Paris, diligently climbing the ladder of French academia and eventually reaching its pinnacle, the Collège de France. Fournier tells this story in detail, treating us along the way to the sort of factual nuggets that only specialists can love (and perhaps not even them): lists of top candidates in French national exams in the 1890s, the titles of lecture programs from the 1920s, the locations of various classrooms within the labyrinth of the Sorbonne, and so forth. Jane Marie Todd has ably translated all this material, although with the occasional annoying slip-up (*conférences*, of which academics give a very large number, are lectures, not "conferences").

FROM THIS CAREFULLY COMPILED data, a picture of a milieu, and a mind, emerges. Mauss was born in 1872 to a bourgeois Jewish family in the quiet Lorraine town of Épinal. He attended secular schools, and at eighteen enrolled at the University of Bordeaux, where his remarkable uncle taught. He studied philosophy, passed the hypercompetitive *agrégation* exam that opened the doors to a career in higher education, and eventually won a position teaching "religious science" at the eclectic École Pratique des Hautes Études in Paris. He helped his uncle edit the pioneering journal *L'Année Sociologique*, for which he wrote, over the course of his career, a stunning 464 book reviews. (Durkheim beat him, notching up 498.) Mauss struggled with a never-finished *doctorat d'état* (a sort of super-doctoral thesis) on prayer, taking off time to serve, during World War I, as a translator for British combat units. A dedicated militant of the French Socialist Party, he contributed to the newspaper *L'Humanité* and took part in the movement to establish cooperative stores as an alternative to retail businesses.

Finally, in 1925, Mauss published his masterwork, *Essay on the Gift*, a concise and luminous short book that anthropologists still regard as one of the classics of their discipline. Drawing on ethnological work from around the world, Mauss proposed a general model of "exchange in archaic societies." Contrary to much received wisdom, he insisted that these societies did not possess "natural economies" based on barter between individuals. Instead, there prevailed a system of collective gift-giving, exemplified by the "potlatch" of the Indians of the American Northwest. (He considered its relevance so universal that he even described the Mahabharata as "the history of a gigantic potlatch.")

Gift-giving of this sort, he argued, was obligatory, reciprocal, and ritualized, involving the symbolic transfer of pieces of the gift-givers' souls. It constituted what Mauss called a "total phenomenon," which extended to every aspect of social life. He traced the survival of elements of this system into modern societies, and concluded that it was an enormous exaggeration to label modern man an "economic animal" concerned only with calculation and gain. "Homo economicus is not behind us, but ahead of us," he aphorized. He ended the essay with an impassioned plea for what Fournier calls "a 'new ethics' founded on mutual respect and reciprocal generosity," involving old-age pensions, health and unemployment insurance, and other elements of the welfare state for which Mauss the socialist militant was struggling at the time.

More than eighty years after its publication, *The Gift* remains a living work with which social scientists still wrestle. To be sure, no one would any longer accept its audacious generalizations about the common features of all "archaic" societies, from Polynesia to Canada to Africa. Still, anthropologists have drawn considerable inspiration from Mauss's emphasis on the complexity and the dynamism of "archaic" exchange systems. Historians, most notably Karl Polanyi and Natalie Zemon Davis, have used it in tracing, in different ways, the complex origins of modern forms of exchange. Sociologists such as Pierre Bourdieu have seized on its criticisms of capitalism, classical economics, and utilitarianism, and on Mauss's militant insistence that economics be linked to morality and religion. Left-wing social scientists have hailed it as the definitive example of a politically engaged work of scholarship. Some French social scientists have even founded a group whimsically titled "Mouvement Anti-Utilitariste en Sciences Sociales," or MAUSS.

In the remaining years of his life—he died in 1950—Mauss did not publish any other work of the stature of *The Gift*. Still, some fragmentary pieces that he composed in the 1930s on "techniques of the body" have had enormous influence, not least through the intermediary of Bourdieu and, earlier, Norbert Elias. By techniques of the body, Mauss meant the way culture expresses itself through particular and highly developed bodily actions: everything from dancing to swimming to sitting (or, in some societies, squatting) to positions for sleeping and sexual intercourse. While Mauss did relatively little work himself in this area, his speculations helped to open up a vast new field of scholarly inquiry. The fact that much of this inquiry today takes the form of a crude "cultural studies" is most emphatically not his fault.

THROUGHOUT HIS CAREER, Mauss had the uncanny knack of distilling his vast reading and considerable common sense into short, lucid, elegant statements of principle. In 1902, for instance: "There are no uncivilized peoples. There are only peoples from different civilizations. The hypothesis of 'natural' man has been definitively abandoned. ... Let us leave aside these pointless speculations on the paradisiacal man or the horde of pithecanthropines." Or this, from a lecture in 1899: "Property, law, and workers' organizations are social facts, real facts corresponding to the real structure of society. But these are not material facts; they exist only in the minds of men assembled into a society. These are mental facts—economic facts themselves are social facts (money, value, etc.) and thus mental facts, just like all the other social facts connected to them." Or this, in 1929: "Every social phenomenon has one essential attribute: ... it is arbitrary. All social phenomena are to some degree the work of the collective will."

Remarks of this sort, which anticipate the best aspects of the cultural turn taken by the social sciences during the past generation, make one regret that Mauss completed so few of the many ambitious projects that he undertook during his career. Just as his vastly ambitious doctoral thesis on prayer never came to completion, so he also left behind fragmentary

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projects on the phenomenon of the nation and on the Soviet Union (of which he was too mildly critical), to mention only the most notable. As Fournier concludes, "Mauss set to work only when goaded by necessity." Durkheim repeatedly lamented Mauss's unsatisfactory work habits: "I fear delays and procrastination, which are only too common from my nephew."

Fournier does disappointingly little to illuminate what lay behind this procrastinating and dilatory side of Mauss's character, which kept him from achieving a reputation equal to Durkheim's. He does provide evidence from which one might easily read a fraught and somewhat oedipal relationship between nephew and uncle. Mauss's father, Gerson, who ran an embroidery factory in Épinal, seems to have had a small part in his son's life. Instead, Mauss attached himself to Durkheim, following him to Bordeaux, serving as his willing amanuensis on *L'Année Sociologique*, and putting a very Durkheimian emphasis on social solidarity and empirical analysis at the heart of his own research. Yet at the same time Mauss engaged in mild but real rebellion, embracing a political militantism that Durkheim eschewed, adopting a self-indulgent lifestyle at odds with Durkheim's sobriety, engaging in a series of sexual liaisons of which his family disapproved (he finally married a longtime mistress at the age of sixty-one), and driving his hard-working uncle to distraction with his erratic habits. The great writer Charles Péguy later captured, with comic brilliance, the figure that Mauss cut in Parisian high intellectual society, and the dandyism that was Mauss's only real departure from bourgeois respectability:

> That supreme distinction, that finesse, that supreme elegance of Mauss (not the wine merchant), the diction, the severe, impeccable, implacable diction.... That elegance of Mauss's.... That ne plus ultra, that delicate profile, that noble, assured gaze, not loutish at all, that flowery language, those pleasing lips, that jacket, democratic but elegant, democratic but sober, democratic but severe, that beard, curly, fiery red, blond, golden yellow glowing red, golden yellow flaming red, well trimmed four-cornered falling, tapering falling, secretly glowing, that mustache, not precisely, not vulgarly, not crudely swaggering but triumphantly royal in almost the same

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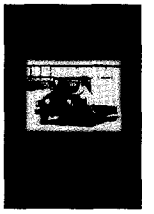

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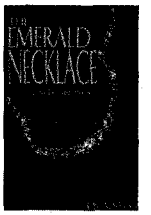

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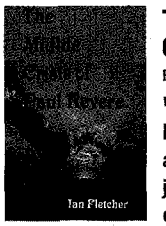

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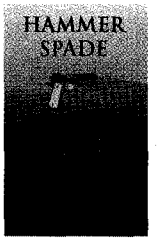

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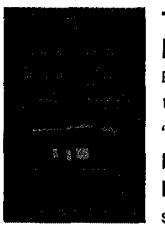

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color, those long sociologist pants, those republican cuffs, that elegant vertical pleat in the pants, so evenly, so equitably remunerative, that elegant High German way of speaking, that lily-and-rose complexion....

It is a description, incidentally, that does more to illuminate Mauss than anything else in Fournier's informative but dry book.

One can understand a biographer's unwillingness to venture into the territory of psychoanalysis, strewn as it is with hidden snares, sharp-edged obstacles, and plentiful quicksand. But Mauss himself may have understood something of the psychological dynamics underlying his endless procrastination, and this makes Fournier's reluctance less forgivable. In a letter to his friend Henri Hubert, Mauss once quipped: "The nephew is loafing about half-asleep, dragging his relative intelligence behind him." To an educated French reader, the words "the nephew" could hardly fail to evoke Diderot's extraordinary book *Rameau's Nephew*, which features the lazy, rebellious, bohemian nephew of the composer Jean-Philippe Rameau, and explores his psychological makeup in astonishing depth. And despite having little time for Freud, Mauss had a keen interest in various forms of psychology and read widely in the subject for much of his life. It is also probably not a coincidence that Mauss did his most sustained and important work in the decade following Durkheim's death. Surely Fournier could have stepped at least a few yards into this terrain.

Just as disappointing, Fournier does very little to sketch out the broad intellectual context in which Mauss worked. He is very good on the small, tight circle of friends Mauss made in his twenties and who remained closer to him throughout his life than anyone else. Such circles of friends, often formed at the École Normale Supérieure (which most of Mauss's friends attended), are a key to understanding French intellectual life in the twentieth century. Fournier lays out the strands of the mixed social and intellectual companionship very clearly, giving particular attention to Mauss's close collaborations with the sociologist Hubert and the crushing grief he felt upon Hubert's death in 1927. But when it comes to the world beyond the network and the family, Fournier falls short.

Take, for instance, the now obscure figure of François Simiand. He makes numerous appearances in the book as a friend and collaborator of Mauss's, and as a fellow socialist. But Fournier does not say anything about Simiand's tremendous importance in the development of French social science. An economist and an acolyte of Durkheim who worked for many years in the French administration, Simiand was an early advocate of strictly quantitative approaches, making his reputation with a devastating critique of the dominant historical school of the late nineteenth century, with its predilection for elaborate political narratives. Simiand ridiculed the study of "events" and held up knowledge induced from statistical analysis as the ideal toward which the social sciences should strive. He had a critical impact upon the development of French economics, and as much as anyone, he helped turn French historical writing away from more interpretive approaches and toward the relatively rigid quantitative focus of the *Annales* school, exemplified by Fernand Braudel and Ernest Labrousse. Simiand's "positive method" followed naturally from much of Durkheim's work and he remained intellectually close to Durkheim's nephew throughout his career. But, with hindsight, the tensions with Mauss's more eclectic and interpretive style seem clear, and one wishes Fournier had explored them.

Beyond Mauss's contributions to social science, his life also dramatically illustrates the history of French Jewry during some of its most dramatic and perilous moments. Born in 1872, Mauss was the grandson of a rabbi (Durkheim's father), and received the Jewish name of Israël. (Durkheim himself, known to the secular world as Émile, was born David.) Mauss received a thorough Jewish education along with his secular one, and while he did not practice the religion as an adult, he never hid or renounced it.

Politically, he came of age during the great surge of French anti-Semitism that accompanied the conviction of Captain Alfred Dreyfus on scandalously flimsy and unfounded treason charges in the 1890s. Later he encountered anti-Semitism among his colleagues and students, including his student Marcel Déat, who moved from socialism to the extreme anti-Semitic right and served as a minister in the collaborationist Vichy regime. Scholars whom Mauss knew well put their anthropological learning at the service of Vichy's repellent version of "racial science." More immediately, the Vichy regime forced Mauss and his bedridden wife into a tiny, unhealthy slum apartment, while many of his friends were deported to the death camps. The experience undoubtedly precipitated Mauss's decline. His successor at the Collège de France, Maurice Halbwachs, could only accede to the position by declaring himself and his wife free of Jewish blood, and presenting genealogical charts to prove the point. (This did not keep the Germans from arresting him.)

Fournier provides all this information in a clear, detached manner. But he fails to call attention to the paradoxical vitality of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century French Jewish life, which is also nicely illustrated by Mauss's life. Despite the extraordinary symbolic violence of the Dreyfus affair, the high levels of anti-Semitism that prevailed throughout French society through the 1940s, and the terrible crimes of Vichy itself, French Jews enjoyed in significant respects a

The Llano River

In a pile of mesquite wreckage in the field
not far above the river, the cotton rat twitches
in its sleep, dreaming of a Sharp-shinned hawk.
At the river bottom, the giant stands
of pecan trees canopy a trampled deer path
which is its own small stream carried away
with her footsteps. The wind moves through
the grass at the bank like three deer, and then
three deer move through the grass like light wind.
They are three does the color of rotten twine,
and they lift their heads when a single mesquite leaf
shakes loose from its tree fluttering as if
it had wanted this long spiraling downward.
Her path leads from the field to the river,
and I have followed with my book in which
none of this appears, not one wooden giant
or a path or a woman I must follow with my book.

JOHN POCH

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degree of toleration that their contemporaries in Britain or the United States could only dream of. Whereas Ivy League universities instituted unofficial Jewish quotas as late as the 1920s and maintained them until after Mauss's death, Mauss himself met with no difficulties gaining admission to the University of Bordeaux in the 1880s. Jews also faced enormous obstacles gaining faculty appointments in American and British university departments through the 1940s. (Columbia famously did not appoint a Jewish professor of English—it was Lionel Trilling—until 1939.) By contrast, when Mauss took courses at the École Pratique des Hautes Études in the 1890s, his teachers already included several Jews, notably the renowned scholar of eastern religions Sylvain Lévi. As for Mauss's own appointments at the École Pratique, and then at the Collège de France, Fournier discusses the academic politics surrounding them in sometimes stultifying detail. He does not draw attention to the fact that, amazingly, in neither case does Mauss's Judaism seem even to have been discussed.

The fact that Jews could enjoy this degree of toleration and success despite widespread anti-Jewish prejudice owed everything to the French "republican" solution to the problems of ethnic and religious identity, which dated back to the beginnings of the French Revolution. As a prominent revolutionary expressed it in the initial debates on granting Jews full citizenship in 1789, "Everything must be refused to the Jews as a Nation in the sense of a corporate body and everything granted to the Jews as individuals." In practice, this policy meant refusing the Jews virtually any collective identity that stretched beyond the bounds of strict religious observance, and making it impossible for French Jews to develop distinct hybrid cultural forms of the sort known in America. The republican synthesis did not even allow for the word *Juif*; French Jews went instead by the supposedly more purely religious label *Israëlite*. Yet French Jews ready to accept these conditions found that the doors of professional advancement opened wide for them—or, at least, wider than almost anywhere else in the Western world.

Mauss himself readily accepted the conditions. He identified himself as an *Israëlite*, and felt a genuine and intense loyalty to the French nation, going so far as to volunteer for military service in 1914 at the age of forty-two, when he was well past any danger of conscription. Significantly, although the Dreyfus affair led to his political radicalization, his Jewishness seems to have had little to do with the process. Fournier quotes a beautiful passage of Mauss's, one of the most passionate the man ever wrote, about the Dreyfus affair (actually, by mistake, Fournier quotes it twice):

> Anyone who did not live through that astonishing civil war conducted without a brutal act, without a drop of blood shed, but with an intellectual passion so fierce that men died of exhaustion, of sadness, of sorrow, of anger; anyone who did not go through it, did not fight in it, however Parisian he may be, does not totally know his city. There is a secret within it that has not been shown him.

Note that Mauss talks about "anyone," and "Parisians," not "Jews" or even "*Israëlites*." It is a passage that might as easily—more easily, one would think—have come from the pen of a gentile.

Although he gave some support to the Zionist movement, Mauss does not appear to have abandoned his passionate republicanism, even when his beloved France turned on him. Indeed, in the fall of 1940 he voluntarily resigned from his departmental chair at the École Pratique to save his colleagues the "disadvantages" that would follow from keeping a Jew in the position. But his feelings and his loyalties were in no sense unusual among French Jews. The great historian Marc Bloch, to take just one example, had a similar passion for the French nation, and felt outrage against Vichy as a Frenchman, not as a Jew. He reluctantly gave up his part-ownership of the journal *Annales* so that it might continue publication under Vichy's anti-Jewish legislation. Bloch, younger than Mauss, eventually joined the Resistance, which led to his capture and execution by the Germans soon after D-Day.

IT HAS BECOME FASHIONABLE TO ridicule figures such as Mauss for what seems like a pathetic dedication to the nation that rejected them. But it has also become too easy to forget a basic distinction: that while Vichy did enjoy real popularity among the French for a time, it was not a freely elected government, and without the defeat of 1940 its policies would almost certainly never have come into being. Remember that even the Dreyfus affair, despite the torrent of anti-Semitism that it highlighted and intensified, ended with Dreyfus's formal rehabilitation and with the re-affirmation of republican legitimacy. Nor, as Mauss's own description indicates, did it lead to the shedding of Jewish blood, at least in metropolitan France. We have to recognize that the French bear a heavy responsibility for Vichy's crimes *and* that French anti-Semitism only triumphed with the help of the Wehrmacht. These distinctions are not exculpatory, but they need to be kept in mind when we judge the choices made by Jews such as Mauss. Their choices were reasonable, indeed honorable ones; they were not in the least pathetic.

Today French "neo-republicans" often lament that figures such as Mauss and Bloch, with their sincere patriotism and earnest political *engagement*, have largely vanished from French cultural life. The readiness of many French academics to embrace a facile multiculturalism, and an anti-globalization ideology that seems to consist principally of vulgar anti-Americanism (laced with anti-Zionist vitriol), would seem to confirm their point. The tendency of some of Mauss's most prominent and interesting successors, notably Pierre Bourdieu, to follow this political path has been particularly depressing. Yet the case can be overstated. The gaseous nonsense spouted by many French academics today has ample parallels in the far more toxic gaseous nonsense spouted by the Stalinists and fascists of the 1930s. And anyone who knows contemporary French academia will see, in Fournier's biography of Mauss, a surprisingly recognizable type. Just as Marcel Mauss himself tracked the survival of non-economic forms of exchange into the modern world, so the republican, progressive spirit that he embodied still survives, to a surprising and reassuring extent, among his heirs. ■

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SANCTI SPIRITUS DIARIST

Fidelity

THE FIRST FRIEND I MAKE IN Cuba is Chaviano, the bus station master in Trinidad. I have just finished a six-hour ride from Havana, and all is well except for the absence of my suitcase. "Unusual," says Chaviano, but not something to worry about. And, indeed, 24 hours later, in rolls the suitcase, missing nothing but an envelope marked CASH—which, ingeniously, contained all my money. An investigation is launched, and Chaviano asks me to give an affidavit—this being Sunday and his afternoon off—at his home. I head to the baseball diamond, find his cinderblock apartment, meet his neighbors, do some magic tricks for his son, and finally sit down to present my account of the theft. Chaviano, in shorts and smoking a cigar, asks piercing questions and painstakingly writes everything down, longhand, on three crisp pieces of paper. I sign the affidavit, he signs the affidavit, and we say a fond farewell.

IT'S EARLY AUGUST, RIGHT AFTER THE announcement that Fidel Castro has undergone an urgent operation and is transferring power to his younger brother, Raul. The moment is charged. Except, nothing is happening. Would Fidel make a presidential comeback? Would he die? Would Cuba change? On the surface, at least, Cubans go about their business indifferent to the limbo—as if not hearing anything from, or about, the only leader many have ever known is perfectly normal. There is no outpouring of emotion for the ailing president, no real support rallies for Raul, and no opposition awakening or mass demand for democracy.

AT THE TRINIDAD BEACH, I MEET Daidy, a spunky, 26-year-old twice-divorced mother of two. She introduces me to her father, a member of the security forces who augments his $17-a-month state salary by running an illegal neighborhood lottery. I ask them how they would feel about a Cuba without Castro and why everyone seems so calm in the face of the possibility. "We are sad," the father says—stiffly and predictably—and wanders away.

AS AN OUTSIDER AND, IN PARTICULAR, as a journalist and, more complicated yet, as a journalist who has come into Cuba on a tourist visa, it's hard to get anyone properly talking politics. And then, once you get Cubans talking, it's often unclear why they are telling you what they are. And, besides, no one has any information anyway. The state-owned radio stations and newspapers give no details; the state TV channels keep to their usual telenovela schedule.

DAIDY SUGGESTS I TALK TO HER BEST friend, Rocco, for some deeper perspective. He will have a lot to say about the "situation," she promises, whispering even though we are alone. I snap a photo of her with my mobile phone, we kiss goodbye, and I set off to track down Rocco. The tranquility is deceptive, he says, when I find him in the nearby town of Sancti Spiritus. Cubans, unused to a vacuum of leadership, are nervous and confused without someone telling them what to do. It's paralysis, not calm, Rocco corrects. In addition, he adds, while pointing out security men in spaces an outsider's eye would simply skim, police and military vigilance—on some sort of autopilot—remains high. Rocco introduces me to his friend Nestor. The three of us sit around the deserted state-run restaurant where they work, slurping garbanzo bean soup. Nestor recounts the story of his father, a dissident who was once, he says, punished with electric-shock treatment and jail time for putting a picture of Che Guevara in a cooking pot and throwing it into the street.

ROCCO INSISTS I STAY AT HIS PLACE, AND we walk the unpaved Avenida Sovietica into the countryside. He lives with his mother, a 53-year-old widow who works in a state-owned fish cannery. She promises to make me fresh mango juice in the morning and lends me a brown flowery nightgown, and we all go to sleep in the stifling heat. At six o'clock in the morning, three men in uniform rap on the front door. They are from immigration and want to see me. "Read the back of your entry form," the top officer advises. Bleary-eyed, hair on end, I find the form and read the small print on the reverse. "In other [sic] to stay outside hotels . . . request authorization from immigration," it says. We are all in trouble. "My mother is too nervous to make the mango juice," Rocco says apologetically as we leave for the immigration office.

AN OFFICER NAMED JAVIER, TOGETHER with a nameless surly civilian, interrogate me. They interrogate Rocco. Rocco's mother starts bawling. I feel awful. I apologize for not reading the visa form correctly. Three hours later, we are let off with a warning. I go into a specialty foreigner's shop, where luxuries like toilet paper are sold, and buy Rocco's mother a box of chocolates. She speaks to me gently. "We have rules in this country," she says and heads to work. How did they know who I was and where I was? And why, if they knew all that, did they let me leave? There are no answers. Rocco and I go to the restaurant. Nestor is in the back room typing a poem on an old typewriter. Rocco now suspects it was his friend who ratted to immigration. "Many things in Cuba are not as they seem," he says.

A FEW DAYS LATER, BACK IN HAVANA, I meet Daniel, the head bus station master. He takes me into his office, shows me a binder thick with handwritten affidavits relating to my case, and stares me straight in the eyes, trying to psych me out. Perhaps I am lying to them about the lost money, I can see him thinking. I have $3 left in my pocket. Yet I start wondering the same thing, doubting my own story. Did I hide the money somewhere? Did I bring money to Cuba to begin with? I borrow cash and go with a friend to the expensive cabaret show at the Hotel Nacional. Onstage, the can-can girls in feathery headdresses and glittery nipple pasties are kicking their heels. I feel watched, but I know no one in the crowd. I have one of those flashes when you can't remember where you are. Or who you are. I have been in the country just ten days, and I am beginning to understand the emotional confusion here. I am beginning to understand the fear. And the attachment. And the paralysis. And I, like Daidy's dad—but maybe different—feel sad about things.

DANNA HARMAN

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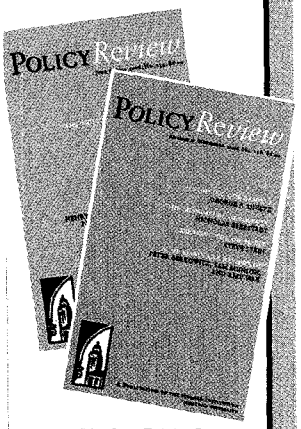

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Law and Terror

This is a democracy. Congress must legislate

Two branches of government have been hard at work in the war on terror these past years, even if they have not infrequently worked at cross-purposes. Executive agencies devise a warrantless surveillance program—and a federal judge declares it unconstitutional. Administration officials and federal bureaucrats devise rules for trying accused terrorists in military tribunals—and the *Hamdan* decision sends the tribunal drafters back to the drawing board. But where are the people's elected representatives in all of this? The Supreme Court has said that Congress has an indispensable role to play in establishing democratically legitimate policy in counterterrorism. Democratic theory tells us, moreover, that whatever actions the executive was able to undertake on its own authority in the immediate emergency of 9/11, and indeed whatever inherent powers it might permanently possess, in fact democracy is better off when the political branches work in concert to create a long-term policy. So where is the legislation, passed by Congress and signed into law by the president, on the multiple topics that make up a full and complete counterterrorism policy for the country?

—Kenneth Anderson

Anti-Americanisms

Biases as diverse as the country itself

If a society veers toward secularism, as much of Europe has, American religiosity is likely to become salient—odd, disturbing, and, due to American power, vaguely threatening. How can a people who believe more strongly in the Virgin birth than in the theory of evolution be trusted to lead an alliance of liberal societies? If a society adopts fervently Islamic religious doctrine and practices, as has occurred throughout much of the Islamic world during the past quarter-century, the prominence of women in American society and the vulgarity and emphasis on sexuality that pervades much of American popular culture are likely to evoke loathing, even fear. Thus, anti-Americanism is closely linked to the polyvalence of American society.

—Peter J. Katzenstein and Robert O. Keohane

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